A LITTLE SWISS BOY

THE FOUR OF THEM SOON SAT DOWN TO THEIR LUNCH IN A PARTICULARLY MERRY MOOD.

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By

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A LITTLE SWISS BOY

CHAPTER I

IN LEUK

THE June sun shone on the green slope above the village of Leuk and the grass carpeting the heights far beyond with cool green filled the air with fragrance. In front of an isolated house on the road to the baths of Leuk two women engaged in earnest conversation.

"I tell you, Marianne," said the more talkative one, "if you could furnish a couple of rooms as I did, you would find it very profitable. You would soon get boarders, for many of the people coming to the baths do not wish to live there, or they should not, like the three I have. Of course you live rather far down and most people prefer the higher localities. If only you lived over there where those people do! They have the best location on the slope, and own the best meadow land too. But I do not like them," glancing at the house with an unfriendly look. "They are eaten up with pride. The man is not so bad, but you should see the woman!"

"How do they show their pride?" asked Marianne.

"Better ask how they do *not* show it," quickly replied Magdalen. "They show it in everything —the way they walk, the way they stand, and they dress as though every day were Sunday. The boy's black hair is always curled as though he were going to a church festival, and the little girl sticks her nose up in the air as much as to say, 'Here I come!' "

"The little girl can't help it if her nose turns up, and the boy isn't really to blame for his curly hair," Marianne replied. "Doesn't the woman speak pleasantly when you meet her?"

"Oh, yes, she does that, and I wouldn't advise her to carry her pride that far," said Magdalen in a threatening tone. "But if you think she stops a moment to speak a few words, as our other neighbors do, you are mistaken."

Marianne looked at the house and said in quick surprise, "What has happened? As long as I can remember that house looked old and gray and all the windows were grimy with dust. Now it looks like a different house, so snow-white and the windows shine in the sun."

"It is the same house, and the change shows

how proud they are," answered Magdalen warmly. "Farmer Lesa lived there more than fifty years with his old housekeeper, and in all those years never drove so much as a nail in the house. What was good enough for father and grandfather before him was good enough for him.

When his heir came from over the Gemmi, there started such a tearing down and rebuilding and such a cleaning up one might suppose a count was moving in. Of course the wife was the cause of it all."

"But I should think it would be necessary to clean up and renew things if nothing had been done for fifty years," said Marianne. "The old house was no pretty sight, I must say! But why do you say the heir came from across the Gemmi? Don't the Lesas belong to our section of the country?"

"Yes, you can find Lesas scattered over the valley," answered Magdalen, "but one of them was married the other side of the Gemmi and remained near Berne or Freiburg. I know this only from hearsay, for it happened a hundred or more years ago. When old Lesa died, it was found his nearest relatives were those living over there. So Vinzenz Lesa moved here, bringing his wife and two children; that was a couple of years ago now. It is said they had a fine house and many cattle on the other side, and a capital cattle range. I've heard his brother runs that estate."

"Good gracious, I must be off!" exclaimed Marianne, startled at the striking of the village clock. "What became of Lesa's housekeeper?"

"She died shortly after he did. She was his cousin and had lived with him fully fifty years. She was over seventy, so she could not undertake anything new. Look, look!" continued Magdalen eagerly. "There they come across the meadow! Now you can see the Lesa woman and her dressed-up children too."

Marianne did not need much persuasion to tarry, for she was very curious to see the people they had been talking about. The three came

nearer, and the children must have had a great deal to tell their mother for they were so engrossed in conversation they had neither eyes nor ears for anything else. However, as they approached the house, the mother pleasantly greeted the two women, the lad pulled off his cap and the little girl called out in a clear voice, "Good day to you!" but continued on their way.

"They look nice," remarked Marianne with an approving glance. "I see no pride whatever, Magdalen, but neatness in children as well as in mother. Her clothes fit so well I am wondering how she does it. The boy's cap didn't conceal his handsome black curls and the little girl with her tiptilted little nose and brown braids about her head looks as merry as a little bird."

"Have you anything else to say?" asked Magdalen, plainly annoyed.

"You are right; I would do better to be on my way than to be talking so idly," replied Marianne, and moved on.

In the meanwhile Mrs. Lesa with her two children mounted the hill, the conversation continuing without interruption.

"Can you believe it, mother?" the lad said. "The child isn't much taller than Stefeli. When

we passed Mrs. Troll's house last evening, she stood at the front door, and she went inside and suddenly we heard lovely music through the open window. Her brother still sat outside reading a book, so I asked what it was and he said, 'Alida is playing the piano.' Think of it, such a little girl! I would have liked to have listened, but Stefeli said we must go on home for it was getting late."

"And so it was," asserted Stefeli. "I would have been glad to stay too, but we had to get back home. Even then father was already at the table when we arrived. I heard that the boy's name is Hugo, and a crooked lady lives with them, for I heard Alida say to her brother, 'Now I must go in; otherwise the Fraulein will fetch me in herself and everything will be all crooked.' "

"No, no, Stefeli," said her mother. "She meant that everything might go crooked with her if she did not obey. Aren't the children's parents with them?"

"I'm not sure. What do you think, Vinzi?" asked Stefeli, turning toward her brother.

"What are you staring at? And why don't you answer your sister?" asked his mother.

"Listen, mother, listen!" he said softly. "Don't you hear that lovely sound?"

His mother paused. The wind wafted the sound of the evening bell from the valley below and as the echoes died away over the hills new notes rose louder and clearer. The mother's eyes rested on him in mingled anxiety and surprise, as he listened intently in an effort to catch just one more note.

"Vinzi, will you listen now to what I say?" asked Stefeli, who showed no surprise at all at her brother's manner.

"Yes," he answered as though waking out of a dream.

"Is the lady who lives with Alida and Hugo really crooked?" asked Stefeli, anxious to have that question settled.

"Yes, perhaps," said her brother a little absent-mindedly.

But Stefeli could not tolerate such uncertainty and retorted a little angrily, "If she is not crooked, she is straight, and there is no *perhaps* about it. We will go down to Mrs. Troll's house and see for ourselves what the lady looks like; can't we, mother?"

"No, we cannot go down to the house on that

account," replied the mother. "But it is time to turn around or father will be home before we are, and that must not be."

"Perhaps they will be sitting out in front," said Stefeli, holding fast to her purpose, and now as her mother turned back, she ran ahead, to discover as quickly as possible if anyone was in front of the Troll house.

Vinzi wandered along quietly with his mother. He was not talkative now as when they had climbed the hill, but his mother was used to these changes in her boy.

"Tell me, Vinzi," she said, "why did you keep on listening after the sound of the evening bells had died away?"

'Oh, I could still hear them," he replied. "And then suddenly I heard a wonderful song coming down from the hills. The black firs joined in with a deep bass and through it all the bell sang a wonderful song. Oh, if only I could repeat it!"

"Wasn't it a song you have heard somewhere?" his mother asked sympathetically, seeking to understand. "If you could sing a little of it to me, perhaps I might know what it was and tell you the words."

"No, no," declared Vinzi. "It is no song I ever heard and it has no words."

The mother meditated in silence; she could not understand Vinzi's meaning. She also had always delighted in music and had taught her children to sing as soon as they could talk; her greatest joy had been their daily evening song.

"Come, Vinzi," she now said, "let us sing together. What shall it be?"

"I do not know. If only I could sing the tune that still rings in my ears!"

"You only think you hear something. Now sing out briskly and you will enjoy it," advised his mother and started a song Vinzi knew well.

He hesitated but the familiar melody soon attracted him and he joined with his mother in a way she loved. The song was ended before they reached Mrs. Troll's house, and Stefeli darted out to them from behind a tree. From this hiding-place she had been watching the two children who sat in front of the house, each with a book. Stefeli would have liked very much to have run up to the little girl and start a friendship, but the governess came out, and she was not crooked at all, but so straight and stiff that

timid Stefeli hid more carefully behind the tree. She now told all this and was very happy to have mother and brother with her as she passed the house, for the governess was still sitting there. The children gave one another searching glances for all four of them were much interested, and Alida said half aloud, "They are the children we saw yesterday. I think I will go and make their acquaintance."

"No, you must not do that, Alida. We do not know who they are," said the governess quickly.

"She will not let Alida talk with us; did you hear that, mother?" said Stefeli.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Lesa. "I am glad you did not run in to see them, and you must not do so, Stefeli, do you hear?"

"Yes, but then we will never meet, and Alida wanted to so much," said Stefeli rather rebelliously.

"You see, Stefeli, the governess probably has entire charge of the children and is responsible for everything they do and for the friends they make," explained her mother.

"There goes father!" exclaimed Vinzi. "If we wish to get home at the same time he does we must walk faster."

As this was the mother's wish, they hastened their steps and met him a short distance from their home, and soon the little family was seated around the supper table.

Everything was quiet during the meal for the children knew they had to be silent and their parents spoke but little. As soon as the children had finished Vinzi asked, "May we go out doors?" and when permission was granted, they hurried off to the barn where there were plenty of nooks and corners for a grand game of hide-and-seek.

The June evening was bright and warm, and Vinzenz Lesa rose cheerfully from the table, went outside and seated himself on the bench in front of the house to enjoy his pipe. Soon afterward his wife came out and sat beside him. Now he grew talkative and told of his visit that day to an acquaintance down in the valley: how he had looked over his meadows, fields and cattle and when he had silently compared them with his own property he had to say to himself: "Vinzenz Lesa, that is a fine property you have inherited."

"Yes, we ought to be thankful, and we will be, Vinzenz," said his wife.

"That is quite true," he continued, "but when I rejoice and plan how to improve the farm and increase the stock, it seems I am hobbled so I cannot take another step. It is the boy Vinzi I mean. For whom should I do all this if not for him? And what kind of a boy is he? He has no eyes in his head! He shows no pleasure, not a bit of interest in leading out to pasture the finest cows to be found anywhere around. If I say to him, 'Just look at the fine fodder in this meadow!' he says, 'Yes,' and looks absently into the distance. There is something wrong with him."

"No, no, Vinzenz, that is saying too much," interrupted his wife eagerly. "If Vinzi does not always listen and sometimes lets his thoughts wander and does not show any real pleasure in farming, at least he has done no harm."

"I do not say he has," replied Mr. Lesa. "But what I do say is that there is something wrong when a boy has no feeling for such meadows and fields as we own and for such cows as are in my stalls, and for everything that belongs to a choice farm. But how to help it I do not know."

"Something may happen to bring about a change. He is young yet, you know," replied his wife in an effort to soothe him, although her

own anxiety about the lad had been increased by the afternoon's experience. Thinking it best to change the subject she told him how, in passing Mrs. Troll's house that day, she had seen the people who had taken the upper rooms for the summer; the two children had looked so nice she would like to have them in her own house.

"A man can never tell what his wife will think of next!" he exclaimed with rising anger. But I know what you are aiming at, and I say, let it alone. I want to live by myself, and as to these strange gentlefolk, our children are not to have anything to do with them, or our girl will be as spoilt as our boy. I am glad to say she is quite different from him. The young heifer runs after her and eats out of her hand. When she is told something, she pays attention, but the boy —he knows nothing."

"To hear you, one might suppose being well brought up was some sort of a disease, Vinzenz," replied the wife calmly. "But you have no need to worry. The governess takes good care her charges do not come near ours. But now it is time to go indoors," and she called the children to their evening hymn.

CHAPTER II

IN THE PASTURE

ONE Monday morning, so early that the sun was just reddening the tops of the mountains, Stefeli rushed into Vinzi's room.

"Wake up, Vinzi; wake up quick!" she called to him. "The man has taken the cows to the pond and father says as soon as we have had breakfast we must take them to the pasture so the man can go back to work. We'll take our lunch with us because it's too far to come home. Won't that be real fun? Come now, hurry!"

By this time Vinzi was awake, but looked at his sister with his large dark eyes as though still half dreaming.

"Oh, I dreamed something so beautiful," he said. "Mother and I were in Sitten. You know I was there last summer with her. We went into a church and everything was just as it looked then. An organ was playing music that was more beautiful than I can tell you."

"Hurry up, Vinzi, and come along! We cannot talk about organs now," urged Stefeli.

"Father is already sitting at the table and mother has carried in the coffee. You know if father gets cross because we do not come, it will not be any fun. Make haste!" and she ran off.

Vinzi knew the truth of Stefeli's words so he sprang out of bed and dressed hastily. Swallowing his coffee and milk that stood at his place, he stuck his bread into his pocket before the other three had half finished their breakfast. The father watched the boy, thinking, "He can hurry when going about his business. Perhaps he will turn out all right."

The mother had packed the midday lunch for the children in a little basket and hung it over Vinzi's shoulder. Stefeli skipped along, a little switch that Vinzi had carefully cut for her in her hand. She used this to urge the browsing cows along, but never did she strike them. Once outside, Vinzi discovered he had left his whip in the barn and had to fetch it. Every herd-boy had a switch, but only to crack it now and then so that it echoed in loud booms from the mountains. Vinzi found no pleasure in his whip, so he was careless where he put it. Now he searched one corner after another, and while he hunted his father began to frown. Then Stefeli

darted up with it in her hand, for she remembered where her brother had put it last. Now the two set off, and the father called after them, "Look out, Vinzi, that none of the cows gets across the stream," and the mother followed with her warning, "Take care not to go too near the stream where the rapids are!"

"Now we must keep our eyes open so the cows stay in our own pasture, and we must see that Schwarzeli does not do too much frisking, for if she does not graze she will get thin," said Stefeli.

Vinzi followed Stefeli and looked on as she carefully placed the little basket in the deepest shade. Then they both sat on the ground which had been thoroughly dried by both sun and wind. The fresh morning breeze rustled through the branches and blew over the meadow far and wide until its soughing died in the distance. Suddenly Stefeli jumped up and darted off like an arrow.

"Schwarzeli! Schwarzeli!" the child kept calling as she pursued the shiny black heifer which was running toward the stream, tail in the air. "Schwarzeli, wait for me!" but the high-spirited creature only leaped higher and was now quite close to the stream. "If she

jumps in she will drown," thought Stefeli in fright, for they had come to the dangerous place her mother had meant in her warning. "Schwarzeli! Schwarzeli!"

Suddenly the fugitive stood still and calmly awaited the arrival of her mistress.

"You wicked Schwarzeli, to frighten me so!" Stefeli exclaimed, grasping hold of the rope around Schwarzéli's neck. "Just wait! If you go on like this I will bring you no more salt that you lick as though it were so much sugar!"

Schwarzeli rubbed her neck on Stefeli's shoulder as much as to reply, "I did not mean to be bad; it was so jolly to caper over the pasture."

Half way back to the place set aside for grazing Vinzi met them and asked in great surprise, "Why did you run away all of a sudden, Stefeli? I heard some lovely music two or three times, and when I turned to ask if you heard it too, I saw you coming back with Schwarzeli. Oh, it is such a pity you did not hear it. I cannot describe it. It sounded like a great choir of deep, strong voices floating over the meadow, growing always softer, you know, like the sound of waters far away. It was so beautiful! Come, Stefeli, we will sit down there again, and perhaps we can still hear it."

"Now go along, Schwarzeli, and be good," said Stefeli as she let go the rope and followed her brother.

However, she had scarcely settled down alongside him when she sprang up again, and this time Vinzi with her, for the brown cow had wandered over to the boundary fence and was pushing hard against the palings, to get through. The two children ran to bring the animal back, and soon the cow was wandering

prudently about the proper field. Stefeli discovered a spot that was especially inviting, where fragrant little wild pinks nodded happily. "Come along, Vinzi, we will rest here. I am sure there will be no more wonderful music under the tree."

The children gazed contentedly on the sunlit landscape and after a period of quiet enjoyment Stefeli said, "I would love to be a cowherd all my life; wouldn't you, Vinzi?"

"No, I would not," replied Vinzi.

"Why not?" inquired Stefeli. "Surely no place is more lovely than this."

"Yes, that is true," Vinzi admitted. "But I would not like to look after cows all my life."

"What do you like to do best? I have not seen you do it," said Stefeli, astonished to think she did not know.

"Most of all, I love to hear the bells peal and hear them resound through the branches of the trees and down from the mountain heights. Do you hear the soft notes around us—do you hear?" and his eyes grew larger and brighter as he listened.

Stefeli pricked up her ears. "That is only the gnats buzzing," she said in a disgusted tone.

But Vinzi continued: "And when I hear such beautiful sounds I would like to remember them and to sing them or imitate them in some other way. I am always wondering how I can do it."

"But that is no profession," Stefeli interrupted.

"Well, that is what I am afraid of, too," said Vinzi in a discouraged manner, "but I have to keep on thinking about it. I have cut a lot of pipes and have tried to see what I could imitate on them. I have five altogether. Out of one I could get deep tones, out of another high ones, and the others have middle notes. I have been thinking how I can blow on two or three at the same time so they will all sound at once, like the church bells, you know."

"You might be a piper," Stefeli suggested suddenly, greatly elated at her inspiration. "That would be a fine profession, wouldn't it?"

"I don't know," replied Vinzi, rather uncertain, "but even if I could be, father would not let me. He found my pipes in the barn one day and threw them all away, saying I must think about more useful things than collecting pipes and working on stuff that amounts to nothing."

"You must not be so sad about it, Vinzi," she

said consolingly. "I am sure father means you must not have the pipes in the barn or stable, but out here in the pasture you certainly may have them. I will watch the cows and call you when anything is the matter. You can cut new pipes, all of which we will lay in a hole under the tree, and you will take them out only when we are here. I will help you blow them. I'll blow on the high pipe and you on the low, and in that way they will sound together like the bells."

Apparently this plan did not console him as she thought it would for he kept gazing on the ground and said no more.

"Now we will talk about something else," she continued resolutely, for she did not like his sad expression, but before they could start talking again, she sprang from the ground and darted away, calling, "Vinzi, Vinzi!"

Vinzi too ran at topmost speed toward the end of the pasture where a wooden footbridge led across the stream. A party of strangers was about to cross when a little dog belonging to them suddenly dashed into the midst of the cows, barking violently. The frightened animals ran in all directions, and Schwarzeli, tail raised high, galloped hither and thither. This excited

the dog to further onslaughts. Stefeli ran after her cows to quiet them while Vinzi struck out at the dog with his whip so that it suddenly turned tail and ran howling after the disappearing party. This had proved such a hot piece of work that the children sought the shade of the big tree and threw themselves down on the ground to get their breath.

Sitting up, Vinzi said, "I wish the dog had been on the other side, where the path leads up to the pasture. I saw a fiery red flower there, and it looked tremendously big, even from where I was—bigger than any I ever saw. If it were not so far, I'd go and fetch it, but it is too hot."

"Oh, I'll go," said Stefeli with assurance. "If it is so beautiful, it can't be too far for me."

Vinzi was going to offer to fetch the flower if Stefeli wished it so much, but the little girl had sped off so far he knew he could not overtake her. So he kept his seat, and now that the midday bell in the village began to ring he quickly forgot everything else, so intently did he listen to the sound.

"There is your flower," were the words that suddenly roused him, and Stefeli laid a bright red scarf before her brother. He was so deeply

buried in his thoughts that he had not noticed the flight of time, and was astonished at her quick return. He gazed thoughtfully at what he had supposed was a red flower. Where had he seen that scarf before? "Oh, now I know!" he suddenly exclaimed. "I saw it hanging on the chair in which the strange little girl was sitting at Mrs. Troll's house. It must belong to her."

Now Stefeli also recalled having seen something scarlet there, and as there had been children in the party that had crossed the bridge, they were probably the same children they saw yesterday.

Vinzi began to consider what was to be done with the scarf. He knew that whatever was found must be returned to the owner at once; therefore the best thing would be for him to run over to Mrs. Troll's house with it. But Stefeli declared it was everybody's dinner hour, and there was plenty of time to do it before evening. As soon as dinner was mentioned, Vinzi suddenly sensed an immense hunger, so he set right to work gathering all the twigs under the tree and built a little fire. While it was dying down Stefeli turned the grassy place into an attractive dinner table, laying out two large slices of

bread spread with golden butter and two snow white eggs which their mother had boiled and which now only needed peeling. Then she carried the basket near the fire and put some clean round potatoes into the glowing coals. They were soon smoking and sizzling so invitingly the children waited impatiently for the moment when they could rake them from the bed of dying ashes. When they had cooled a little they bit deeper and deeper into the snowy whiteness, though they thought the hard-baked crust really the best of all. The cows had been so busy grazing that now they were ready to rest a bit. Even Schwarzeli had settled down peacefully, though she tossed her little black head from time to time, showing she could not be trusted altogether.

The children cleaned up their place under the tree, for paper and eggshells did not belong on the fine green carpet of their living-room. And then they sat quietly and contentedly gazing over the pasture, enjoying the peace that was round about them.

"Now I might carry back the scarf we found," said Vinzi after a while. "The cows are sure to be quiet until I get back."

"Yes," agreed Stefeli. "The big ones will rest for a while and if Schwarzeli starts to run to the stream I'll entice her back. I have kept all the salt mother gave us for the eggs. You did not ask for any, and Schwarzeli loves it."

Taking the scarf which Stefeli had folded, Vinzi ran off, but it took a good quarter of an hour for him to reach Mrs. Troll's house. The front door stood open and all was quiet inside.

Hearing chopping in the garden he thought Mrs. Troll might be there, but suddenly quite different sounds attracted him so powerfully that he mounted the stairs. Through a half open door he caught the notes of a gay melody. Stepping up, he laid his ear on the door to hear better, but in his longing he pressed quite hard and the door flew wide open. Instantly the small musician who sat on a high stool before the instrument swung around and looked at him. Seeing he was quite shocked, she jumped down from the stool and ran up to him. "Oh, did you find my scarf and bring it back to me?" she asked as she caught sight of the scarlet cloth in his hand. "That is lucky for me! Miss Landrat gave me a good scolding for losing it and said that, as punishment, I must go over the

same path I traveled with papa and the other gentlemen this morning and find it. Now you have brought it I do not have to go, so I will give you a reward. What would you like best?"

Vinzi gazed in surprise at the wonderful child who could produce such entrancing music and now speak to him as though they had been friends for a long time. He hesitated, but at last replied timidly, "Can I wish for anything I choose?"

"Yes," replied his new acquaintance decidedly, "but ask for something I can give you, not such a thing as a ship or a horse."

"No, I don't mean anything like that," said Vinzi. "I only wish to hear the music again."

"The music? Do you mean what I was playing when you came? That really is no present. What is your name?" the little girl asked, suddenly interrupting her own line of thought.

When Vinzi mentioned his name, she replied, "And mine is Alida Thornau. Practising gets so tedious that I play one of my little pieces between exercises. Do you have to practise too?"

"What do you mean by practise?"

"Oh, don't you know? Then you are lucky!" she exclaimed. "You see, practising is sitting

"OH, DID YOU FIND MY SCARF AND BRING IT BACK TO ME?" SHE ASKED.

still on a round stool and everlastingly running your fingers up and down on the piano. That is called playing the scale, and repeating it over and over is called finger practise."

"Why do you have to practise?" asked Vinzi in wonder.

"Because one has to obey," answered Alida, "and Miss Landrat ordered me to practise from two to three o'clock every day. I have no lessons here like I do in Hamburg, but every time papa comes down here I have to promise again to obey my governess. You see papa is up at the baths with mama because she is sick."

"How did you learn to play that pretty piece?" asked Vinzi who had listened to all this with intense interest.

"Oh, that is easily done when one has to practise so much. All one has to do is to play the notes that are written there," she explained.

"Then you are fortunate to be able to do so much practising," said Vinzi, and he gazed at the piano with such longing that Alida suddenly remembered the reward he had asked.

"Now I will play for you," she said.

Vinzi stared at her flying fingers in amazement and Alida saw in the mirror above the

piano how he followed her playing. That pleased her and she repeated the Spring Song but stopped suddenly in the middle of it, whirled around on the stool and asked, "Would you like to learn to play the piano?"

Vinzi's eyes sparkled, but only for a moment; the next he gazed at the floor and said sadly, "That I can never do."

"Why, yes, you can very easily," returned Alida with conviction. "I can teach you. You will soon learn all I know, and you can practise with me. That will be much more fun than for me to sit alone. Then you can play little pieces like this one that pleases you so much."

Vinzi's eyes grew larger and larger with astonishment and longing. Unbelievable happiness was suddenly before him; he need only say yes. He could not grasp it.

"If it pleases you, say yes quickly, that you really wish it," said Alida a little impatiently. "Then you must come here every day at two o'clock, like today, because then Miss Landrat takes a walk with Hugo and I have to practise until three o'clock or sometimes even later, until they return. So we will be quite alone and I will teach you everything."

In a voice that trembled he said, "There is nothing I would like better."

"Then everything is all settled!" declared Alida with satisfaction. "Come tomorrow—or would you like to start today?"

Much as he would have liked it, Vinzi did not dare that, for Stefeli had been left alone long enough. But he would return the next day, and gladly, if it might be so. Still he could not quite believe his great good fortune, but because Alida was so sure, his doubt was conquered and he ran off in great excitement. What would Stefeli think of the plan? This was his chief thought as he ran.

When he reached the pasture he saw the cows resting as he had left them, though Schwarzeli was wandering back and forth quietly.

"It took you a long time," Stefeli said. "What did she say?"

Seating himself on the grass beside Stefeli, Vinzi related all that had happened, explaining that he had not promised definitely to go each day for the hour's practise because he must first learn what she would say about being left alone. Stefeli considered for a moment, then said eagerly, "You can do it very easily, Vinzi, and it

will bring you great joy; I know that quite well."

"I know it too," agreed Vinzi, his eyes aglow. "Do you think anything might happen to the cows during that time? They are still quiet today."

"There is nothing to worry about," his sister assured him. "All the time you were away they lay quiet and looked around, and Schwarzeli took a little walk. That is the way it always is in the afternoon."

Vinzi himself knew this was true, but was glad of Stefeli's assurance. There was now so much to talk over concerning the coming days and their consequences that they sat engrossed in conversation until horns sounded from here, there, everywhere. This was the signal for the herders that milking time had arrived and the cattle should be driven home.

Vinzi leaped up from the ground in great surprise that evening had come so quickly and Stefeli took the basket on her arm and went to fetch the wandering Schwarzeli. Her brother whistled his cows together and then the two children gleefully marched off behind their small herd to the stable where their father awaited them.

CHAPTER III

UNEXPECTED EVENTS

THE next day after they had eaten lunch and the cows had settled for their afternoon rest, Vinzi looked again and again at the mountains. Suddenly jumping up, he said, "It must be two o'clock. Yesterday as I came back the sun stood above the Felsenhorn. That was at three o'clock. In another hour it will be there again."

"Yes, run off quickly, for the sooner you go, the sooner you will be back to tell me all about it," urged Stefeli.

When Vinzi mounted the steps at Mrs. Troll's house, Alida came running to meet him and exclaimed, "You come just at the right time! They are all away and we will be alone. This is the time you should always come. Let us begin at once," she proposed energetically, and took a small sheet of music and began teaching rather hurriedly, for she did not wish to devote much time to the names of the notes. Vinzi gave close attention and understood quickly,

and they soon left the reading of music to study the keys. To make her teaching more vivid Alida struck the key each time it was named.

Vinzi was lost in astonishment and asked suddenly, "But how is the music made?"

"It is all printed in the book; we read it there and play it," explained Alida.

"But someone made it first, didn't they?" asked Vinzi timidly. "Don't you think if one only knew how, one could write down all the tunes one hears?"

"That's not necessary for there are plenty of pieces of music already," said Alida with a sigh as she glanced at the big book of exercises.

Vinzi also looked at the open book, but he gazed at it as if it were a marvel.

"Now I'll play a short piece," continued Alida. "It is an easy one and you can soon learn it."

Vinzi listened and his eyes glowed with happiness.

As she finished the Black-Forest clock struck three and jumping down from the stool she announced, "Now the lesson is over. Come again tomorrow," and Vinzi held out his hand in farewell and then ran off.

So matters continued for three days more. Vinzi was such an apt pupil that his teacher was amazed at his progress. He rejoiced that he was sent to the pasture these days and not required to help his father in the stable and barn as sometimes happened, for now his thoughts were so entirely filled with his study of music that often he did not hear what was said to him. On the few occasions when his father needed him for little tasks, he would send him away with a shake of the head, saying, "Where is your head, boy?"

The afternoon for the fourth lesson had come and he was so happy that he took two of the steps at a time and was half way up when a harsh voice called out to him, "Hey, what's the matter? You bold boy, come down at once!"

"I want to go up to Alida," explained Vinzi.

"To Alida? You know no Alida and she does not know you," Mrs. Troll shouted savagely, for it was she who stood at the bottom of the stairs. "Come down this moment or I'll fetch you in a way you will not like."

Vinzi obeyed, but as he descended he called out with all his might, "Alida, I cannot come, but you know I was here."

"What's this you are calling out?" said Mrs. Troll roughly. "I see you want to fool me and make me believe you know the little girl upstairs whose name you have happened to hear. There is the door!"

But Alida had heard the voices and now came running down the stairs to say in a superior manner, "Why are you sending Vinzi away? He wishes to see me."

"Ah, the matter was arranged then!" exclaimed Mrs. Troll, using quite a different tone. "Did Miss Landrat know he was coming?"

"No, but I knew it," answered Alida haughtily.

"Then we will tell Miss Landrat and everything will be settled," said Mrs. Troll scornfully. "The best thing for him to do now is to go where he belongs."

That was Vinzi's opinion too, and shaking hands with Alida he went sadly away, for he thought all was over. But Alida was very angry that the woman had dared to send her friend away, and she called out furiously, "I'll tell my papa everything, and he'll not let Vinzi be treated so!" and flew up the stairs.

As soon as Mrs. Troll saw the governess re-

turning with Hugo, she reported what had happened in her absence. "It is certain the boy has been here before," she concluded in excitement. "His coming today had been arranged, for he shot up the stairs as though it were his home, and Alida was waiting for him."

Miss Landrat was horrified. "How could she be so bold? To think of making an acquaintance with a cowherd of unknown family!"

"Perhaps it is the boy who found the red scarf," suggested Hugo who had been listening quietly. "We saw him Sunday with his sister. He looked like a nice boy, and it surely would be all right for Alida to know him."

Miss Landrat said no more, but turned and went upstairs, Hugo following. Throwing open the door, she asked, "Who was with you while we were away?"

"Vinzi," answered Alida.

"If that is the name of the boy who was here, I would like to know what business brought him," the governess continued in growing anger.

"He came for a piano lesson," was the reply.

"Do you think I am joking with you, Alida?" said Miss Landrat, now quite furious.

"No, I do not think so."

"Then answer me sensibly!" she exclaimed. "How did you come to ask him here? What did he want?"

"A piano lesson," as if it were a matter of course.

"But, tell me, Alida, who was to give him the lesson?" interrupted Hugo.

"I was," she answered earnestly.

Then Hugo burst out laughing and asked, "Didn't the idea of your giving him a piano lesson make him laugh?"

"No, he was very attentive," said his sister.

"That is enough!" exclaimed the governess angrily. "Ask no more questions, Hugo. Alida must not think it funny to invent such stuff. I shall write her father immediately, but the first thing—" and she hurried out of the room.

Hugo now began his questions again and to his great amusement heard that several lessons had already been given, that Vinzi had learned a great deal, and that Alida wanted to have her father know how Mrs. Troll had treated him.

Meanwhile Miss Landrat went to Mrs. Troll and instructed her to forbid Vinzi entering her house if he ever came near again.

That same evening Vinzi's father passed Mrs.

Troll's house as he cut across the fields to his home, and she caught sight of him as she stood in her garden.

"Hey there, neighbor Lesa!" she called. "I would like to tell you something." And when he came up, she added, "I think it would be better for your boy if he had something to do instead of running into other people's houses for mischief."

"What do you mean, neighbor?"

"I mean that your boy has been here a number of afternoons to visit the little girl upstairs, but her governess wants no more of it, and he should stay where he belongs."

"I'll see he does. Good-bye!" and Mr. Lesa went on his way.

It was just supper time as he entered his house, and both children were already at the table, because the mother liked to have everything ready on her husband's arrival. As the meal progressed and he spoke no word she looked inquiringly at him, but since it was evident he wished to be let alone, as soon as the supper tasks were finished she sent the children off to bed. Directly he was alone with his wife, he said, "Sit down, for I have something to talk

over with you," and when she had done so, he continued savagely, "I've had enough of the boy. He not only does nothing, understands nothing, and is good for nothing on the farm, but now he brings shame and disgrace on us. This is the end; he must go away."

"Oh, what has Vinzi done?" she asked in anxiety. "It is not his way to be mischievous. Vinzenz, tell me, has he done something wicked?"

"Ask him yourself what he has been doing. I've had enough of it. To think of a neighbor

telling me it would be better for my boy to be doing something else than running into other people's houses and carrying on! Things have been going on long enough; I'm through. He must go. Away with him!" and in his agitation he paced the room. As he seated himself again, his wife said, "I cannot understand what has happened. Vinzi is not the kind to go into people's houses without being invited. There must have been a reason. Let us talk with the boy before we condemn him; he is sure to tell us the truth. Just think, Vinzenz, what it means to send a twelve-year-old boy away; he is certainly much too young for that."

"I'll not oppose your talking with him," replied her husband, "but I tell you this: he has to go. I have had it in mind for a long time, and it is the only way in which he can be helped. He must go some place where he will have no opportunity for such mischief, where there are very few people, and only those who find pleasure in work. I mean people who stay by themselves and who do not mix with strangers."

"But it would first be necessary to know the people," she interrupted forcibly. "You surely do not mean to say our Vinzi should be turned

over to anyone just because he takes pleasure in his farm work?"

"Quietly, quietly! I am coming to that," her husband continued in the same tone. "You know that last fall I was up on the Simplon where my cousin Lorenz Lesa lives. He has a farm up there with a few fine cows. It is a small place but everything is kept in excellent order. I took quite a liking to it, and the boy must go there. He'll come to his senses when he sees how happy and contented other boys are with such a life."

"Is it really possible you are going to send our boy away?" lamented his wife. "And high up into the mountains? It must be dreadfully lonesome up there. I can scarcely imagine how it is. I do not know your cousin or his wife. How will they take to a boy sent to them as a good-for-nothing, whom his parents could not manage? It is as though our Vinzi had become a criminal and was sent into exile."

"You need not get so wrought up about it, my dear," he began. "I am not doing this to punish him, but to bring him up properly. Cousin Lorenz is a good and just man, and will not ill-treat the boy. And Cousin Josepha is an

altogether worthy woman who is rearing three boys it is a pleasure to look upon. I have seen them in the midst of their cows and I never heard such yodeling, such a cracking of whips, such joking. They acted as if they were out for a holiday. Our boy will learn from them nothing can be better than the farm."

Many anxious questions filled her mind, but she knew she could do nothing more. Vinzi must go; that was settled, and she knew of no other place to send him. She only asked her husband how soon he would go; surely they must ask whether the cousins would take him. Then her husband explained that it had been settled between them the fall before that Vinzi was to go to them for the summer and that in return one of their sons was to spend a summer in their home. It would do the mountain boy good to see a new place and different ways of working, and the other boys might wake up Vinzi. Mr. Lesa added that he believed a man in the valley was planning to drive his cattle over the mountain and that would be a good opportunity to send Vinzi with him.

The mother went to bed that night with a heavy heart, and at dawn went quietly to

Vinzi's room to hear what he had done and to prepare him for what was coming. Vinzi woke to find her sitting on the edge of his bed holding his hand in hers.

"Tell me, Vinzi," she began, "now while we are alone together, what you did yesterday to make your father so angry. Were you in mischief? Tell me everything."

Vinzi thought for a moment, then remembered how angrily Mrs. Troll had sent him away. Perhaps his father had heard about that, so he related the whole incident.

A great load fell from the mother's heart; Vinzi had done no wrong. But she understood very well how the neighbor's words had angered her husband, for Vinzi had caused him much secret worry and vexation. She explained to the lad how he had done wrong not to tell her about the matter, and asked if he had not thought he ought to tell them at home before beginning the lessons. Vinzi said candidly that he had feared his father would not give permission, and as he had such an intense desire to learn something about music, both Stefeli and he had decided the afternoon was a good time for him to leave the pasture, and if nothing

happened to the cows his father could not say anything. But his mother told him his silence had been wrong, and now he would have to accept the consequences, which she hoped would be for his good. Then she unfolded his father's plan and told how he hoped Vinzi would learn to enjoy farm work and how she prayed he would return so bright and happy that his father would be pleased with him.

In spite of the care his mother took to tell him the decision to send him away, Vinzi's look of alarm brought tears to her eyes, though she was proud he uttered no word of complaint.

Everything went on as usual that day, and the children spent the hours out in the pasture. Stefeli was accustomed to Vinzi's long silences, even though she could not hear all he seemed to hear. But today he went too far, and when the silence grew unbearable she said impetuously, "Do say something, Vinzi! It is just as though you were not here at all."

"Well, I won't be much longer," he answered dolefully, and went on to tell her he was going away, high up into the mountains, to people he did not know.

"When do you have to go?" she asked,

oppressed in spite of the impossibility of believing the news. When Vinzi was unable to answer that, she exclaimed with relief, "Oh, then it may be such a long time that it will not happen at all. Let's be happy again, Vinzi."

That evening after the children had gone to bed and the parents were sitting alone, the father said he had gone to town to talk with his friend, but found he had left that morning to drive his cattle over the mountain. But there was nothing unfortunate in that; on the contrary. He had been informed that a young workman from Gondo was returning to that town on Monday and as he would make the way from Brieg by foot, would have to put up somewhere over night. That would be better for Vinzi; he would not have to walk all the way. They would stay over night at Berisal, where an innkeeper Mr. Lesa knew would give them good accommodation.

Mrs. Lesa had listened silently, but now she said, "Surely you are not going to turn our boy over to a man we know nothing about except that he is going over the mountain?"

"I looked him up immediately," replied her husband, "and talked everything over with him.

I am told he is a good honest man, and believe he is all right. All Vinzi needs is a companion, for at twelve a boy is no longer a little child."

"Young enough to go off alone," the mother sighed. "Must it be on Monday?"

"It is best so," said the husband decisively. "When a thing has to be done, it cannot be undertaken too quickly."

"It is a blessing we can give the boy into the keeping of our Father in Heaven," sighed Mrs. Lesa. "It is my only comfort."

"That is true," he replied, glad to know his wife had some consolation. "Well, now everything is in order," he said after a pause. But in spite of his words he pushed his pipe from one corner of his mouth to the other as though there was something in his mind that was not quite in order. "The boy must be told what is going to happen."

"He knows. I told him early this morning. All you have to do is to tell him when," said the mother.

This was welcome news to her husband. So Vinzi had known all day, and had been quiet about it; there was to be no scene such as he had anticipated with dread.

The next day when the afternoon sun shone down on the bench in front of the house, the father seated himself there according to his Sunday custom and called Vinzi to him.

"You know that you are going up to your cousin on the mountain," he began when the boy was sitting beside him. "It is beautiful up there, and you will like it. I am sending you for your own good, and you must not bring shame on your parents. Your fellow-traveler knows the house where you are to go, and you are expected, though they do not know exactly when you will arrive. Just tell them who you are and that I sent you as I arranged. You leave early tomorrow morning with a man who knows all about the trip you have to make."

Vinzi remained silent, which was as his father wished, and to cheer his son just a little he launched into a description of the merry life of the young cousins on the mountain.

Meanwhile the mother was packing the knapsack which Vinzi would carry and Stefeli followed her about. She had been told what was to happen the next morning and knowing there was no chance to ask questions of her father while he was talking to Vinzi, hoped she could

talk to her mother about it. But the knapsack was packed in silence, supper was served and the mother seemed unable to utter a word. She felt she must not betray her grief and make it any harder for Vinzi, but she really had to say a few words to him, and when he was in bed and his room in darkness, she went to him.

"I am glad you have come, mother," he said immediately. "Do you think my cousin will be angry if I happen to forget about his cows?" Stefeli always called me if I was not watching."

"I do not know," answered his mother. "You see I do not know your Cousin Lorenz or Cousin Josepha. But I want to ask you, Vinzi, to do the best you can. If they complain or send you back home, your father could not stand it. Never do anything so you dare not look up to your Father in Heaven. Remember when fearful or lonely that He is always above you, that He sees and hears you. That is the best comfort, Vinzi; do not forget it."

Vinzi readily promised he would remember her words, and with that she left him.

Early the following morning the father accompanied Vinzi down to the station where they were to meet his traveling companion.

CHAPTER IV

A DEPARTURE AND AN ARRIVAL

Two letters had just come to Mr. Thornau who was staying at the Leuk baths with his sick wife. One was from his daughter, the other from the governess, and both urged that he pay them a visit. That they wished exactly the same thing gave him no particular pleasure, for he knew from experience that such accord usually arose from some disagreement. Laying the letters on his wife's bed, he said, "That is another summons to go to Leuk, but don't be disturbed about it."

In spite of the gentleman's words, his wife was greatly excited and murmured, "Oh, if we had not sent the children away! It isn't good for them. They should be with us."

"If you want them here, Alida," said her husband, "just say so. You know my only reason for keeping them down below is that you may have greater quiet."

"Yes, I would feel better if you would bring them," replied his wife. "The governess may mean well, but she is too strict and does not

understand children. She is severe when it is unnecessary, and under her training Hugo grows more quiet and reserved and Alida more

obstinate and disobedient. Neither of our children is easy to handle."

"Quite right," agreed her husband. "Alida has my temperament and being a girl needs specially careful guidance. Hugo has your disposition and also your delicate health."

"He also needs special control," added Mrs. Thornau. "You will always deal with him gently, will you not, when I am here no longer?"

"Let us not say another word about it!" protested Mr. Thornau. "I will be on my way to settle this case, for it always takes two hours. I will walk down, but probably ride back."

When Mr. Thornau arrived at Mrs. Troll's house, the door was suddenly thrown open and Alida darted out, for she had seen him coming. Greetings over, the little girl began to pour out her story but her father checked the flow with, "Miss Landrat comes first. Then it is your turn," and that was really the way he heard of the matter. Alida gave a vivid account of Vinzi's banishment by Mrs. Troll, and called Hugo as witness that the boy was by no means a street urchin, but a very nice lad, with whom anyone would much rather be friends than with Mrs. Troll.

The father did not doubt for a moment that there was some new reason for his daughter's sudden enthusiasm about music. But that was not the main issue. He felt some reparation must be made to the boy who had been kind enough to return his daughter's scarf and after-

ward been offered insult when he came to see her on her invitation. He would call on the boy and his parents and apologize at least, perhaps even make the boy some little present. Much delighted, Alida took the place of guide, for she had learned from Vinzi where he lived.

"I like the looks of this place," said Mr. Thornau, glancing approvingly at the well-kept house, the newly mowed lawn, the swept path, and the scoured bench in the shade of the walnut tree. "Too bad! Too bad!"

He muttered the last words, but Alida quickly interpreted their meaning and said, "Yes, it is too bad that we don't live here, papa, is it not? But we could soon move here, as our piano is only rented. Then Vinzi could practise with me every day. And how I would like it! Practising alone is dreadfully tedious and that is why I gave him lessons, so he could practise with me."

"So that is the reason of the music lessons! Capital!" said her father, bursting out laughing. "And your pupil was eager to learn?"

"Oh, yes, and so clever!" exclaimed Alida. "Just think, papa, when I explained anything, he often understood it better than I, and would explain it to me."

Her father smiled as he approached the front door, which stood open, and stepping into the hall, he knocked on the first door. At a call to enter, he opened the door into a large sunny room where Mrs. Lesa sat at the window doing some needlework, with Stefeli before her busy with thick knitting needles and coarse yarn. Mr. Thornau introduced himself and said he had come with his children to express the sincere regret they all felt that her son Vinzi had received such unpleasant treatment from Mrs. Troll. He hoped they could tell the boy how sorry they were and give him some proof of their friendship. Mrs. Lesa declared she knew nothing of Mrs. Troll's harsh treatment for Vinzi had not complained, but she understood now what had happened; it was Mrs. Troll's words that had stirred Vinzi's father to send the lad away from home. He had left that very morning, and she had been unable to think of anything else since his departure. Begging the gentleman to be seated, she informed him how things had gone with Vinzi.

Alida quickly ran over to Stefeli to ask, "Where is your brother?"

"He has gone away," answered Stefeli.

"Why are you not in the pasture? When he is away I thought you always waited in the pasture until he came back," she said, seeming to know about everything.

"Vinzi is not away for just an hour. He has gone for many weeks, so something different must be done about the cows, though we do not know what," explained Stefeli. "You see I cannot tend them alone. But mama says everything has a good side, and now I will be able to stay in the house and knit woolen stockings to have ready for Vinzi when he comes home."

"I think that belongs to the bad side," said Alida quickly. "The heavy needles will hurt your hands and the thick yarn has cut your forefinger already. Come along out to the barnyard. I hear the hens cackling out there."

Stefeli glanced at her mother who had heard what the children were saying, and when she nodded her head in assent, the two girls ran off.

"Wouldn't you like to go out too?" asked Mrs. Lesa of Hugo, who stood behind his father's chair. "The air will do you good."

"Why, of course, run along with them, Hugo," said his father.

Hugo went quietly outside, and Mr. Thornau

continued, "If I understand you rightly, Mrs. Lesa, the boy has been sent away because he takes no interest in the farm, which is to become his life work. But he cannot be a stupid boy for he accepted with great eagerness my daughter's invitation to give him music lessons, and she tells me he showed unusual ability."

"No, no, there is nothing stupid about him," said Mrs. Lesa forcibly. "The only trouble is his thoughts are ever wandering. If he is in the field with his father and a bell sounds from near or far, the lad is sure to pay attention to nothing else until the sound can be heard no longer. Often it is as though he were listening to something no one else can hear. Of course that has made his father impatient, and he thinks if Vinzi lives with other boys who love farm life, he will like it too. But I do not know how things will go," with a doubtful shake of her head. "This thing is very deep-seated in Vinzi. Even when a little baby, he would stand still when he heard any ringing sound. If he fell and was hurt, if I took him on my lap and sang he would stop his crying and be happy again."

"That clearly shows your son has an ear for music, delights in it, and probably has consider-

able talent. He should be trained for the thing for which he is best fitted. True, that takes several years, but he would become a finished musician, be happy and satisfied, and you with him."

"That is not for Vinzi," she said calmly. "His father would never allow his only son to leave home for years and years to study music and then gain an uncertain living among strangers."

"It is queer how things go in this world," remarked Mr. Thornau. "Look at that youngster out there! He is my only son, but if he would express a wish, I would give him anything. If he wished to study I would be the happiest of men. But what do you think? If I say, 'My son, would you like to learn to ride?' he answers, 'No, I'd rather not.' If I ask him, 'Would you like to learn to play the violin, the flute?' he says, 'No, I'd rather not.' 'Would you like to be a sailor and cross the seas to foreign lands?' 'Oh, no, I'd rather not!' And so it goes with every question. And so I must look with envy at your son who has a decided desire in his heart."

Mrs. Lesa had been watching the boy as he stood leaning against the tree and staring indifferently before him while the two girls played a lively game of tag.

"He cannot be in rugged health," she said sympathetically. "He looks pale and weak. He ought to live out in the meadows."

"Yes, that would be good for him," agreed Mr. Thornau. "He was never very strong, but since my wife has been ill and he has been away from his mother he has grown even more delicate."

"Then why don't you let him stay with her?" inquired Mrs. Lesa earnestly.

Mr. Thornau smiled and said, "You are a real mother even toward those who do not belong to you; that is good. But, you see, complete rest was ordered for my wife and so I brought the children down here, for when the boy is with his mother, the girl wants to be too, and she is very noisy, though she cannot help it. Now my wife wishes me to bring the children back to her as she worries when they are away. But my visit has lasted long enough, Mrs. Lesa," he said, rising. "However, please permit me to come again; it is pleasant to be with you."

Mrs. Lesa accompanied her visitor outdoors and called the children. Hugo was still leaning against the tree, but came up slowly behind the scampering girls. When Stefeli heard her

mother invite the gentleman to come again, she said quickly, "You'll come too, Alida? Perhaps I will be in the pasture again and you can visit me there. I'm sure you would like it."

Mr. Thornau and the children wandered back to Mrs. Troll's house, and when they met her in the doorway, he informed her he would be taking his children away in a few days, and while their stay would be shorter than he had expected, he would fulfill his bargain with her. Their mother wished to have them with her, but the chief reason for their removal was he would not allow anyone to suffer for doing a favor to his children.

How changed Mr. Thornau was, to be sure, thought Mrs. Troll as the gentleman walked away. Once so friendly, now so abrupt and formal, and he was going to take the children away. And all on account of that boy across the fields. It was really laughable, thought she, though she did not laugh by any means. She would have been glad enough to recall her angry words to Vinzi, but it was too late, for the carriage Mr. Thornau had ordered for his return had already come. As the carriage drove up the mountain, Mr. Thornau sat lost in thought. He had received a most pleasant impression of Mrs. Lesa and her household and wished he had known her before he had placed his children with Mrs. Troll. She would have been justified in scorning him and his children, for it was through them her son had been sent away. But she had shown no sign of resentment. He would put an end to the study of the piano for his daughter; if she had any real love of music she would act far differently. At the moment he reached this conclusion Mr. Thornau was greeted by a pedestrian going in the same direction, whom he recognized as his table-mate at the hotel.

"Oh, Mr. Delrick, what a hermit you are! Always alone!" he called to him, and ordered his driver to stop. "Now jump in, or I shall think my company is not good enough for you."

Mr. Delrick thanked him for the invitation, but declared he was unwilling to give up his daily exercise.

"Then I'll go with you," said Mr. Thornau, leaving his carriage. "I am sure I have news which will please you," and as they wandered along together, he continued, "Tell me, do you intend to turn your back on all society and become a hermit?"

"Matters are not quite so bad as that," said Mr. Delrick, laughing, "but it is true that if I could find a home with simple, orderly people where I could enjoy the beauties of nature in quiet, I would gladly leave the hotel."

"I've found that house!" exclaimed Mr. Thornau in triumph. "That is my news," and launched into an account of the day, of Mrs. Lesa, and her home. "That, Mr. Delrick," he concluded, "is certainly the home for you, and though I know we shall lose you, I cannot help telling you about it for you have a way with you that one cannot help doing you a favor."

"My dear Mr. Thornau," said his companion, clapping him on the shoulder, "I am most grateful to you, and your description really creates a keen desire to look up the house."

When Vinzenz Lesa left his house next morning to look after his farm work, he saw a stranger approaching, who asked politely, "Might this be the house that belongs to Mr. Lesa, and do I have the honor of speaking to its owner?"

"Yes, sir."

"That is fortunate, for now I place the matter before you myself. My name is Delrick and I come from Dresden. I am stopping at the Leuk baths, but there are too many people there to suit me and so am seeking a quiet house where I may stay for a few weeks. Mr. Thornau drew my attention to your place and now that I see it myself I greatly desire you to take me in, if you will."

"I live here with my wife and child and we do not take in strangers," said Vinzenz Lesa abruptly.

"You are right in that," Mr. Delrick answered pleasantly, "and that is just what I would do in your place."

Mr. Lesa looked at the gentleman in astonishment and then said, "Since we are of the same opinion, our business is done."

"I am afraid it is true," replied Mr. Delrick. "But perhaps you could tell me of some other house; one as much like yours as possible, as quietly and beautifully situated and surrounded by magnificent trees. You have a beautiful farm, Mr. Lesa, and I cannot hope to find such order and care elsewhere."

Vinzenz Lesa was pleased that the gentleman had his eye open to the fact that his farm was better kept than most. True, the condition of the yard and garden was to be credited to his wife. It occurred to him that she would be sitting in the house thinking about her boy; it was time that he had arrived at his cousin's on the mountain. She had scarcely spoken the whole day, and he did not like that. Perhaps the boy's absence might worry her less if she had this gentleman to care for. She had once suggested arranging a room for boarders and it might not be at all disagreeable to spend the evening hours in the company of such a gentleman.

"Such a house as you suggest is not within

my knowledge," he said after lengthy deliberation, "but my wife is inside, and you might talk with her. If she agrees, I would be quite willing to have you stay. And now will you excuse me? I have work to attend to," and he held out his hand.

Pleased and surprised over this unexpected turn, Mr. Delrick grasped the offered hand and asked, "Do you mean you will abide by whatever your wife decides?"

"Yes, just that," replied Mr. Lesa as he departed.

On the call to enter after his knocking, Mr. Delrick stepped into the room and found a little girl busy knitting a thick stocking by the window. When he asked if he might speak to her mother, Stefeli said, "Oh, she'll soon be back. When she heard you rap, she went into the other room because she was crying a little."

"Oh, I am so sorry. Has something sad happened to cause your mother to cry?"

"Yes, Vinzi has gone away for the whole summer, and mother doesn't know the people he is with," Stefeli informed him.

"I suppose Vinzi is your brother?" sympathetically. "Why did he have to go away?"

"I don't quite know," answered Stefeli, "but perhaps because he took piano lessons from Alida."

"Well, that is a peculiar thing," remarked Mr. Delrick, smiling. "I suppose you were with your brother a great deal, and you must miss him sadly?"

"Yes, indeed, and so does mother, and he is missed at the pasture too. We were always together. Father has a cowboy now, and mother will not let me go with him. Father said at dinner time the cows won't graze but run about as if lost, and Schwarzeli wants to jump all the fences, and when the cowboy runs after her she grows wilder still. I can well believe that, after she has known us so long and so well. Of course she does not know a strange cowboy's voice, and doesn't feel that things are right at all, poor Schwarzeli!"

When Stefeli had gone that far in her story, the door opened and her mother entered. Mr. Delrick explained that he had come to her at her husband's suggestion, but he was not sure he ought to bother her now as he had just learned from her daughter that they were having some sorrow.

"Sometimes it does us good to have to pull ourselves together and have no time to brood over our troubles," said Mrs. Lesa calmly.

"It is still better not to consider a trouble as trouble at all. That makes it easier to bear, don't you think so, Mrs. Lesa?" he asked as though he were an old friend.

"I believe I understand your meaning, though I do not know just how to reply," she answered after a little thought.

"There is no hurry about that," said Mr. Delrick pleasantly. "If you will permit me to live in your house for several months, we will have plenty of time to talk about it."

Mrs. Lesa looked at her visitor in wonder, but the happy surprise that flitted over her face at his words quickly disappeared. "That does not depend upon me alone, sir," she said in her quiet way. "I know my husband will not take strangers into the house, and that decides the matter."

"I have already come to an understanding with Mr. Lesa," explained Mr. Delrick. "He told me himself that he would be satisfied with whatever decision you make."

Mrs. Lesa did not know what to think. Just

a short time ago her husband had declared no strangers would be taken in. She suggested Mr. Delrick should first look at the two rooms they could give him, to see if they would suit. If they did, she would talk the matter over with her husband and send him word at his hotel. This pleased Mr. Delrick, for he did not wish to hurry a decision, he said, as he followed her upstairs. The light, airy room with windows to the east through which shone the morning sun attracted him no less than the one to the west with the giant walnut trees to shade it, and he was so loath to leave them that she could not fail to observe it.

When Vinzenz Lesa came home that evening the first thing he said was, "Well, what did you arrange with the gentleman?"

His wife told him she had been unable to give any definite answer without knowing what he thought about the matter. "But, Vinzenz, I believe that if the gentleman comes to stay with us, he will bring us a blessing," she concluded.

"We always have need of that," replied her husband, "so you better let him know at once that he may move in."

CHAPTER V

IN EXILE

VINZI made the first half of his journey without speaking a word. The thought that he was to live with strangers a long time depressed him so he did not wish to talk and scarce realized what went on around him.

At Berisal his companion took him to the innkeeper who knew his father, and after the man had plied him with questions about his trip, he thought it best for Vinzi to have his supper and go to bed quickly, as he must be weary with his journey. Indeed, he was so tired he sank into a sound sleep and did not wake until his fellow-traveler shook him the next morning.

He dressed hurriedly, swallowed his cup of coffee and soon was climbing the mountain with his companion. The pair went along silently, for Vinzi was more and more overcome with fear the nearer he came to his destination.

"Look, my boy!" said his guide suddenly as he stopped his inveterate whistling. "Do you see that gray stone house over there?"

"I see it," he said at last in a low tone.

"We will stop there for something to eat," said his companion. "Then comes the last climb. After that our way is down. You will not have far to go, but I have to go all the way down the valley, so we cannot rest long."

It was all the same to Vinzi whether the halt was long or short, and he had no desire for food. He thought only of his arrival at the house which might be as dismal as this one of gray stone. And then those strangers! Now they reached the summit and the road began to descend.

"What is that?" asked Vinzi, looking timidly at a great building on the left of the road.

"You need not be so frightened," said the young workman. "There's nothing bad about it. On the other hand, it's a fine place. The monks live there who take in travelers in the winter who are half frozen."

"What is that over there?" asked Vinzi a little later, pointing to an ancient tower.

"You are making such eyes at it, would you like to go inside?" asked the young man, laughing. "I would not care to enter those old walls. It is as silent there as if it were the end of the world. But there are old men there. Ten

years ago I saw one sitting by the tower, his hair and beard as white as the snow on yonder peak. A year ago I saw him again. Ah, there he is now! Step lively, my boy; you have not much farther to go."

But there was a half hour's brisk walk before his companion pointed down the road and said, "Do you see that little white church, with the few houses beside it? That place is called Near-Chapel. The village is a little lower down, but your cousin lives at Near-Chapel. I'll show you the house and then keep on my road. You cannot miss your way."

When they reached the chapel which stood near the road on a little rise, the guide paused and said, "Well, here we are! Now go to the right past the chapel, to the very last house. There is a barn beside it. Lorenz Lesa lives there. Good-bye and good luck!"

Vinzi shook his hand, and with drooping head said, "Good-bye, and I thank you."

His guide turned and went whistling away. Vinzi gazed after him, and when he passed out of sight felt he had lost the last home tie; the unknown lay before him. He walked past the chapel to the house that stood beyond. The

small stone building near it must be the barn. On the other side of the house was a shed, roofed with shingles and stones, evidently the hayrick, for fodder was stored within. As the house door was closed and the door of the shed stood open, Vinzi went to the hayrick. That no steps led up to the little door was not surprising to Vinzi; he knew the arrangement. The little shed did not rest on the ground but stood firmly on four blocks, to keep the hay dry and ventilated. As Vinzi knew, it was a case of clambering up to the open door, which was so low a full-grown man had to stoop to enter. Vinzi climbed up nimbly, and found a tall man working inside.

"Good evening!" he called out. "Does this hayrick belong to Lorenz Lesa?"

"It does. What do you wish of him?"

"He is our cousin. I belong to Vinzenz Lesa of Leuk, and my father sends greetings to you. You know why I have come," Vinzi informed him confidently, for he hoped this man was the cousin himself.

Sticking his wooden pitchfork into the hay, the man stepped forward to hear the lad better.

"Well, so you are Vinzi!" he said, giving him his hand and looking him straight in the eyes.

"It is good that you have come up to your relatives. Did you make the journey all alone?"

Vinzi's heart went out to the friendly speaker. He no longer gazed at the ground, but looked into the kindly eyes and told about his trip and how glad he was to find his cousin so quickly, for he had been frightened at the thought of coming among strangers.

"There is nothing to be afraid of here," said the man good-naturedly. "The boys aren't exactly tame, but you will get along with them. You must be hungry," he continued, "so we will go to my wife, who will attend to that."

With a spring Vinzi landed on the ground and the cousin followed. Just then a stout woman opened the door of the house and looked calmly around. "I have to let some of the smoke out through the door," she said to her husband, but she looked inquiringly at the boy at his side.

"I am bringing our young cousin from Leuk," he explained. "He is a bit afraid, so you must see to it his fear doesn't grow," and chuckled.

"You are welcome, young cousin," she said, offered her hand and inspected him from head to foot until her husband said:

"I think it might be just as well to continue

your examination indoors. The youngster still carries his knapsack, and if he should happen to get something to eat soon, he would not take it amiss. He has put a stiff march behind him."

"He can eat right away," said she. "Supper is just ready; the smoke drove me from the hearth. I will serve it at once, for we need not wait for the boys; they will soon be coming."

Stepping into the house, she took off Vinzi's knapsack, and the lad was soon comfortably seated at the table. As they ate, all timidity vanished. He was ravenously hungry for he had scarcely eaten on the journey. Somehow his cousin must have guessed this, and long before his plate was empty had heaped it again. Vinzi thought he had never eaten anything better than the steaming potatoes and the lovely yellow cheese. Now and again the wife would say, "Pour out some more milk for the boy. He must be thirsty after all the wind and dust on that long trip."

Suddenly there arose a great hubbub, with loud huzzas and much whip cracking.

"It is the boys," explained his Cousin Lorenz; "they have brought the cattle. I must go out and help them. But perhaps you would like to

come out and see the cattle and the stable?"

"Let him rest tonight," said Josepha. "Tomorrow he can start the day with the boys."

"I only asked because boys always like to be around when there is something going on," her husband replied. "But Vinzi is free to do as he likes."

"Then I'd like to stay here," chose Vinzi.

It pleased her that Vinzi was glad to stay indoors, and first of all he must have another cup of milk for she declared it was needed to lay the last dust of the journey. Then she seated herself comfortably in her chair, saying, "Now tell me about your people and how things are going at home."

Vinzi needed no second invitation for he had been thinking about what his mother would be doing then, wondering how Stefeli was faring alone in the pasture, and how everything was getting along without him. Now there was a great tramping outside, the door was thrown open and a youngster about Vinzi's age came rushing in. A little chap hurried behind him, and then a taller boy followed who evidently did not wish to be last, for giving a quick spring, he tried to vault over the smallest boy by lifting

himself on the little fellow's shoulders. But the sly youngster ducked down and the bigger fellow fell headlong with a thud.

"You shouldn't come in in such an unmannerly way, Faz," said the mother calmly.

"Good evening, cousin!" exclaimed the eldest boy, holding out his hand to Vinzi.

"Good evening, cousin!" called out the second boy also, and "Good evening, cousin!" greeted the youngest, pressing up to Vinzi.

While Vinzi was shaking the proffered hands, the father had come in, and as he sat down he said, "Well, now you must learn one another's names, boys. Your cousin is called Vinzi. That is for Vinzenz. My three are Joseph, Boniface and Maurus. Those are their calendar names, but here at home we call them Jos, Faz and Russli. Now I think you had better take your places at the table."

Now that quiet had been restored so that she could be heard, the mother said, "As our cousins did not inform us they were sending their son to us, we did not make ready for him. I have been thinking if he is to sleep in the house, the storeroom will have to be emptied of the rye and corn and all sorts of stuff. But the squeaking

and scratching of the mice might scare him. Wouldn't it be better if I made up a comfortable bed in the hayrick for him?"

"I will be glad to sleep in the hayrick," answered Vinzi.

"Just what I thought!" said the wife, greatly pleased that everything upstairs could remain as it was. "You will have to have a little table, a bench and a chest of drawers to be comfortable," she added, "and when you have finished eating, boys, you can carry them out for him."

She bustled off, and her three sons soon followed, and as Vinzi thought perhaps he could help, he would have gone too. But his cousin beckoned him back, declaring his knapsack had been enough of a load for that day; it was none too light, and hanging it on his arm, they went out to the hayrick. They had scarcely reached it when the three boys came hurrying along. Jos carried the chest on his back, Faz the little table with a quilt on top of it, Russli a bench, and the mother followed with pillow and sheets. With an agility that clearly showed she was used to climbing into the hayrick, she was in at the little door, ready to take one thing after another as her husband lifted them up. When the

last had been put in, his cousin said, "Now we'll say good-night. Inside the door is a wooden bolt, just like the one outside. With it fastened, you are sole master of your castle."

And now his wife came down, saying, "There, everything is ready for you. See, young cousin, down there is the brook, and that will be your washroom. No one will disturb you. You will find a towel on your bench. Sleep soundly!"

The three boys also wished him good-night, but Jos turned around again to say, "Are you coming with us early in the morning, when we drive the cows out, Vinzi? And will you stay with us all day while we are herding?"

"Why, of course," answered Vinzi, "but you must tell me which cows I have to watch most carefully. Will you wake me so I am not late?"

"Yes, I'll call good and loud through the round air hole," promised Jos.

Now Vinzi was alone. He climbed up to his little door and looked into the hayrick. There in one corner on a high soft pile of hay, his bed was made. Beside it, the hay had been pushed away to make room for the little table and bench, and the chest stood against the wall. It

was a most comfortable little room. But he could not go to sleep yet, for he was quite excited with all the experiences of the day. Sitting on the beam which formed the sill of his door, he looked outside. The heavens were studded with brilliant stars. Then the moon rose from behind the mountains, lighting up the dark trees and meadows. The little church beyond gleamed white and the snow-capped mountains towering above the rocky cliffs became clearer and bright-

er every minute. Vinzi's eyes grew bigger and bigger. In his great fear of what lay ahead of him, he had seen little else than the gray stone house on his journey. But how different was this scene from anything he had pictured!

There was no wilderness of stones about him. The moonlight fell on a green earth and turned the tips of the larch trees yonder to silver. The ripple of the brook alone broke the deep silence. Vinzi listened to the beautiful tune and the notes became fuller and fuller; he heard whole melodies. He must have sat there a long time listening when a sudden gust of wind blew the door against his knee and startled him out of his dreaming. He had never seen the stars so brilliant. The words of his mother, how the Lord was always above him, looked down on him and heard him, reached his heart as never before. Surely he was near Heaven there, and he was filled with gratitude to the God who had let him find good where he had feared only evil. His cousins had received him as a friend and he was already quite at home with them. He wished he might sing a loud hymn of praise out into the night, but it was too late for that; not a candle gleamed in any of the cottages.

So he closed his little door, bolted it, and sought his bed. It was soft and comfortable. Not a straw could prick him through the heavy linen sheets. He gazed at the brilliant star that shone through the air hole opposite his bed. Even when his eyelids tried to close, he opened them to gaze again. Yes, the star still shone on him, and when he fell asleep it was with a wonderful melody resounding in his ears. The star was singing to Vinzi, and he heard it in his dreams.

The next morning he was awakened by a dreadful hubbub, for his name was being shouted by numerous voices. Stefeli, thought Vinzi, had never made such a noise when she came to wake him. But then he suddenly saw where he was and knew the voices that kept shouting louder and louder. Perhaps they had been calling for a long time. Hastily stepping into his clothes, he threw his door open and leaped down among his noisy cousins.

"Hurry up! Come along!" they chorused.

Vinzi replied that he had not washed yet so they should go along and he would follow. The two elder boys ran off but Russli went to the stream with him, saying confidentially, "You

don't need to wash; no one will ever notice it."

"No, Russli," objected Vinzi. "One must wash every morning. Besides, it makes one feel better. Oh, the lovely cool water!" and Vinzi knelt down by the brook and splashed the clear water over his face time and time again, and then drank one handful after the other.

Now he looked so fresh and happy that Russli, full of the pleasure of imitation, said, "I'll wash with you tomorrow morning, and drink too. I'll do it every day."

When they reached the house, the cousin and his wife were still at the breakfast table. Both gave Vinzi a friendly greeting, and Josepha set a large cup of coffee before him, suggesting that he eat plenty of bread with it, for the fresh mountain breeze would soon make him hungry.

When his Cousin Lorenz rose from the table, Vinzi followed him out to the stable where Jos and Faz were cracking their whips as a sign they were ready. Their father now released the cows one after the other and the procession started off to the pasture which lay a considerable distance beyond the chapel. Russli walked beside Vinzi and held him firmly by the hand, trying to hold him back as much as he could.

Jos and Faz had all they could do to keep the cows on the roadway and to urge them along, for fresh grass tempted them now to one side, now to the other.

"Let me go, Russli," said Vinzi, pressing forward. "Can't you see I must help your brothers with the cows?"

"You had better keep Russli in order," called out Faz. "That will be helping us most. The little chap is always tickling the cows with his switch so they scatter in all directions and we can scarcely control them. He is a mischievous little mite, and you'd better hang on to him," and as the obstinate cow with which he had been struggling decided to move on, Faz ran ahead to the herd.

"Vinzi," said Russli, quite happy that he could have his cousin all to himself, "have you a knife?"

"Why, yes, of course. I need one."

"Then I'll show you a great bush that makes fine switches. Strong ones, you know; not brittle. Will you cut me a few?"

"What do you want a switch for?" asked Vinzi. "I hope you do not want to whip the cows. You heard what Faz told me about you."

"Oh, I only tease them a little," said Russli. "Then they jump up in the air and are awfully funny."

"But it's not funny for them," answered Vinzi. "They jump from fright. Those thin switches hurt, and I'll cut none for you. But I will make something else if the wood is the right kind. Show me the bush."

Russli ran eagerly ahead and soon turned off the road across a pasture, until he reached a large bush whose branches grew straight up into the air.

"Here!" he called to Vinzi.

Highly pleased with the bush, Vinzi began to cut the branches he liked best, and when he had a bunch of them, he said, "Now, come along, we must go over to your brothers. Do you know where they are? I can't see them any more. Then I will do the cutting for you."

Russli ran along, followed by Vinzi, who suddenly paused to exclaim, "Oh, how lovely it is here! But when do we get to the pasture?"

"We are in the pasture now," said Russli.

Vinzi looked around him. Here and there stood tall, dark larches, through whose delicate branches one could glimpse the blue of the

heavens above. Beneath their feet stretched the lovely green of the mountain pasture land, brightened by the fiery red alpine roses which grew amongst the moss-covered stones. A full mountain stream rushed along its course, and the rocks that hindered its passage tossed it high into snow white foam. So this was the pasture! Vinzi saw the cows a short distance away peacefully browsing beneath the trees. The sunlight fell through the trees on the glowing flowers and sparkled on the stream's clear waters. The mountain breeze started the shadows playing under the larches, and called forth a soft singing in their branches.

The tuneful rustling seemed to swell, then to die away in the distance. Vinzi stood motionless, gazing and listening.

"When will you begin cutting what you promised?" asked Russli at last when his patience was entirely exhausted.

"Yes, I'm coming," said Vinzi, as though waking out of a dream.

Vinzi now ran off to where the cows grazed and looked about for his cousins. Across the road was a very large treeless pasture in which browsed many cattle. A small group of young

herders were bending over a smoking spot on the ground. Jos and Faz were among them, Vinzi saw that. He called out to Jos with all his might, but in vain for some time, but as soon as Jos heard him he came over to him.

"Come over to us, Vinzi," he called as he ran up. "We are making a fire, or rather a smoke. One of the boys has found a hole, and there is an animal in it, perhaps a marmot. We think we can smoke it out. Come along, it is real fun."

"No, I would rather not," replied Vinzi who found no pleasure in seeing a frightened little animal jump out of its hole, with boys to chase it and frighten it more. "Besides, I have promised Russli to go back immediately. I want to ask you something. Do you think your father would mind if I cut a pipe for Russli?"

"Mind? What are you thinking about? I don't see any reason why he should!" exclaimed Jos. "You can be sure father will not be displeased and we will be only too glad if you keep the little mischief away. He makes the cows so wild we are kept busy running after them."

"But ought I not to help you with the herding?" asked Vinzi. "May I just sit and cut pipes?"

"You will help us that way more than any other," declared Jos.

Vinzi was highly pleased over this division of labor, and hurried back to Russli. Seating himself on a mossy stone where the reddish-purple violets perfumed the air, he selected a branch, and cut it off where it started to grow more slender, and began to work on the thicker piece.

"What is it going to be when it is finished?" asked Russli, who looked on with deep interest.

"It will be a pipe," answered Vinzi.

In happy astonishment Russli pressed closer to the carver so as to lose nothing of the process of this marvelous work. He knew the little reed pipes that broke so quickly, but he had never seen such a long, thick wooden pipe.

Vinzi had discovered much since he made his first pipe. Now he cut several small holes, for that way he could get several notes. But it took much time, for it was not easy to bore the little round holes, and Vinzi was very exact in his work. Several hours were spent on it, for between times Vinzi stopped to listen to the way the wind sang through the tall trees and to the murmur of the stream, sometimes one of joy,

sometimes one of gentle complaint. Then too, he paused to breathe in the perfume of the violets. But at last he closed his knife and said, "There, Russli, take it; your pipe is ready."

With flashing eyes the happy boy put the pipe to his mouth and blew a high, piercing shriek. Russli himself was frightened at it.

Handing over the instrument to Vinzi, he said, "Now you play on it," but at that moment there resounded a shrill whistle and then another. Clearly it was a call.

"It is time to eat," explained Russli. "That's the way they always whistle when we are to gather for lunch. Come along!"

"A pipe! Look at my pipe!" he called out to his brothers as he drew near where they were already sitting on the grass eating. When Russli saw this he looked searchingly around, then ran to where his lunch-bag lay, and quickly pulling out what was meant for him, held it out to Vinzi. "Here, take it," said he. "This is yours; the others have already taken theirs."

As soon as Jos had finished eating, he called out from where he sat, "Here, Russli, give me the pipe, I want to try it."

"Come and get it then," said Russli drily.

Vinzi had jumped up to take it over to Jos, but evidently he had a feeling that if he wanted it, it was for him to fetch it, and he quickly came up, as did Faz also, who called out, "Show it to me too." But Jos was already holding it to his mouth and warded Faz off. Jos knew something about how the fingers had to be placed on the holes in order to produce different notes, and he succeeded, though they were very discordant and harsh.

"You do not know how! Just give it to me!" cried Faz, grabbing the pipe, but in his hands it shrilled and screeched.

"It looks so pretty," said Jos with regret. "We have never been able to make so nice a one, but it does not sound well."

Taking the pipe from Faz, Vinzi said, "I will give it a trial myself," and began to play a little tune.

The notes followed one another so clearly, so beautifully, they all stood spellbound, and when Vinzi stopped, Jos exclaimed eagerly, "Oh, you play it well. Teach me!"

"Me too," added Faz.

"And me too," shouted little Russli.

"Give me the pipe," urged Jos.

"No, give it to me," demanded Faz, but Russli had grabbed his property and ran away, fearing the stronger boys would rob him of it.

"Let him have it," said Vinzi, "and I will make each of you one."

The promise quieted the brothers but no amount of calling could bring Russli back, and finally Vinzi had to run after him to persuade him he would not lose his valuable property. Now the boys seated themselves in a close circle for all wanted to see how Vinzi did it. He was kept playing on and on, everything he knew, and when he had no more tunes, he made up melodies from the sound of the bells and the song of the birds he had heard.

As he played on, his audience had grown, for the boys from the other pastures had waited in vain for Faz and Jos and one after another had come seeking them. Once there, they tarried, for the music pleased them all, and the afternoon slipped away unnoticed.

Suddenly one of the crowd called out, "It's six o'clock! I hear the horn!"

They quickly scattered, but one after another called back to Vinzi, "Bring it tomorrow! Bring it with you tomorrow!"

WHEN VINZI STOPPED, JOS EXCLAIMED, "TEACH ME!"

It was now necessary for Jos and Faz to hurry to drive their cows together and set off on the homeward journey, and as Jos was in full run for his cattle, he called, "Vinzi, keep the little chap with you on the way home; that will be helping us."

When they approached the house, they saw the father standing in the doorway waiting to receive them. When they came near, he called out, "Well, how did you get along the first day, young cousin? How do you like our pasture?"

"A pipe, look at my pipe!" lustily shouted Russli. "Here, take it, father, it sounds lovely."

"Look there, the boys are coming with the cattle," said the father before whose eyes Russli held the pipe. "Go and show it to your mother. I'll soon come in."

"I love it in the pasture," Vinzi was able to say at last. "It is so lovely up there under the trees, the day was gone before we knew it."

"Yes, and Vinzi helped us a lot," added Jos, who had joined them. "We got on the move with the cows ten times quicker than we usually do, and they have been so quiet all day, and grazed as they have not done for a long while. I wish Vinzi could stay with us all the time!"

"I am glad to hear that!" exclaimed his father. "That's a good start. Let us hope you will always get along well together."

He went to the stable with his boys and Vinzi followed, thinking his cousin would be pleased if he wished to help. "What can I do?" he asked him from the stable door.

"We'll be through soon," replied his cousin, busily milking. "But if you would like to look around the barn and stable, you may do so."

Vinzi stepped out into the twilight and watched the setting sun tip the mountain cliffs and dark spruces with gold. Then the chapel bell sounded so sweetly that it filled him with delight and he stood motionless long after the glow had paled and the sound of the bell had died away.

"Hello!" cried a voice behind him, while he received a resounding slap on the back and was dragged over to the pump where there was a great washing and splashing every evening before the boys went into the house.

"Are you awake again?" asked Faz who had done the tugging, fully believing that Vinzi had fallen asleep in the path.

"Yes, and your fists woke him up before he

reached the water," said Jos. "Isn't that so, Vinzi?"

"Indeed yes," answered Vinzi, "but I had much rather he should seize hold of me than that he should tell your father I fell asleep in the path. I really was not asleep."

"Faz doesn't carry tales; he just strikes a blow," said Jos comfortingly.

And now to the house, with Faz in the lead. The mother was waiting for them at the table, patiently enduring the noise Russli was making with his pipe.

"That sounds like a dying cat," remarked Faz as he entered.

"Don't laugh at him the first time he tries," said his mother. "He is playing quite cleverly for a little boy. He has just been praising you, he says you have not cuffed him once today."

"He only gets a cuff when he deserves it," remarked Faz. "He was good today because Vinzi held the reins. I hope he stays with us."

The other three now came in and Russli darted to his father with the cry, "Now for the pipe!"

"No, no, Russli, first supper and then the pipe," said his father, seating himself. "You

see, when I was a boy I cut pipes too and had great times playing on them. So I must have a look at your pipe and see if I can still play."

Russli was satisfied with this, for he smelled the hot corn-cakes his mother was now serving and he eagerly attacked his plate.

When the mother had cleared away the supper things, the father said, "Well, now bring me the pipe and let us hear what it sounds like."

Russli was a bit sleepy after his feast of corn-cakes, but the fear that Faz might snatch the pipe from him to carry it to his father and afterward keep it for himself brought him to his feet. "For heaven's sake, what are you bringing me?" asked his father, taking the long pipe and examining it closely. "That is no ordinary pipe. It is a real shawm with all the necessary holes."

Lifting it to his lips, he brought forth something that sounded almost like a tune.

"Father can do better the first time than any of us after we had tried many times," said Jos in astonishment. "But Vinzi can do better than father."

"Then we will listen to him," said his father, handing Vinzi the pipe.

Vinzi remembered one little tune better than all others, and he had played it fully ten times that day for the boys. Alida had taught it to him. He played it now, and as he came to the end there was intense silence for a moment.

"Yes, he can play differently than I," admitted his cousin. "I wonder who taught him."

"That was lovely!" sighed his wife, quite overcome. "I would like our musician to play a hymn that we could all sing."

"And I can," said Vinzi, "because mother sings a hymn with us every evening at home. What shall I play?"

"Can you play *I Sing to You with Heart and Mouth?*" she asked.

Yes, Vinzi knew it well, and after seeking a little for the right pitch played with assurance. The mother sang well and her husband joined in with a strong bass, and suddenly Jos lifted his fine voice. Faz growled after his father, then jumped to his mother's high notes, and Russli squeaked in between. But the other voices were so strong that these false notes did not disturb the song. Mrs. Lesa was so delighted that she begged for another song directly the first was finished, and then another and another.

The cousin was highly pleased and declared, "That was a splendid entertainment and we will have another tomorrow. It is a good thing to praise God with beautiful music."

When Vinzi went to his hayrick his heart was so full of thanksgiving that he sat in the doorway a long time looking up into the sky with its myriad of stars. "Oh, how beautiful it is here, and it grows more lovely! To praise God with music is something beautiful, Cousin Lorenz said and tomorrow we will do it again, and so every day," said Vinzi to himself. His pipe had pleased his cousin, and that thought added to Vinzi's happiness. It seemed as though he must sing aloud, that to do so would only be joining in the great song of praise that sounded all around him, from the twinkling stars, the gleaming chapel, the gurgling stream and the golden moon sailing so majestically above the towering crags.

The pungent perfume of the hay was lifted by the night wind, and it was that which at last roused Vinzi. The night had grown cool, and he quickly closed his door and sought his comfortable bed.

From that day on there was music in Lorenz

Lesa's house every evening. One might have supposed it was the chief work of the day. In fact, the toil of the day was really behind the singers and so they could enter into the pleasure of their leisure hours with special joy. It was Vinzi's particular delight to see that his Cousin Lorenz and his wife Josepha were the ones who longed most for the music.

Every night at supper she would say, "I suppose Vinzi will soon begin to play," and after the regular time had been given to music, her husband would suggest, "It's not too late for another little song, is it?" For now that he had started to sing again, he kept recalling the songs he had sung in his youth, and if Vinzi did not know them, all he did was to sing them over several times and then Vinzi could play them perfectly. The others would follow his piping, and so learn the tune. This afforded Lorenz immense satisfaction, and after an evening so spent, he would shake Vinzi's hand and say, "Your music makes a fellow feel quite young again. Your shawm pipes the joy of youth into my heart."

CHAPTER VI

STILL HIGHER UP THE MOUNTAIN

THREE weeks after Vinzi had arrived at his cousin's house, a good friend of his father stopped to see him on his way to Domo. He brought greetings from Vinzi's father and mother and said that on his return journey he had promised to stop at the Lesa home to carry back news of the boy. Vinzenz and his wife were eager to know how their son took to the life on the mountain and how he was getting along with his cousin's family, and whether or not his reserve and dreamy ways made him a burden. Lorenz and Josepha were to decide when he was to return home. When they thought it time to send him, would they kindly find a companion, or let them know so they could arrange the matter in Leuk? The man had expected to return to Leuk in five or six days, and it was now the fifth day since he had called on them and then journeyed on to Domo.

Lorenz had just stepped into the room where his wife was setting the table for supper.

"The man from Leuk will not come today," said Lorenz. "I suppose he will be here tomorrow, and we must make him understand the joy Vinzi has brought us."

"Indeed so," his wife agreed. "I was just wondering why they sent him up here. Certainly we would wish to keep such a son at home. People do that sort of thing if a boy is not as he should be, or if he has strange fancies which he might lose among strangers. But Vinzi is an exceptional boy. Since he has been in our home I scarcely know my own boys. There is Russli, for instance. He had to be dragged to the pump every morning and while he was being washed he would scream and fight for dear life. Now as soon as he is out of bed he rushes to the stream behind the hayrick and thinks it fun to wash himself because Vinzi does it and likes it. He scrubs himself cleaner than I ever washed him, just because he wants to be like Vinzi, who certainly always is spick and span. And now Russli never comes home from the pasture crying. When I ask him how it happens he comes home without howling and complaining, he says Faz doesn't beat him any more because Vinzi takes his part. When I ask Faz how it is he lets

Russli come home in peace, he declares Vinzi keeps the boy in order so he needs no beating. Faz says he likes it better so, and wishes Vinzi would remain with us always. He never talked that way before, and he liked to hit out. And Jos, who always made the least trouble, as you yourself must admit—"

"Yes, truly, the eldest son is always the model boy in his mother's eyes," interrupted her husband.

"Indeed, our Jos is good to look at," continued the wife, "but Vinzi is even better-mannered. Jos himself has remarked it and imitates whatever Vinzi does. Good manners suit him so well that, with a cap on his head and a mantle over his shoulders such as we see strangers wearing on the passing stage-coach, he would be taken for a gentleman's son."

"That's not to be desired," said Lorenz aside.

"And we never had any idea Jos had such a fine voice until Vinzi came with his music. What lovely times we have every evening! We are never disturbed any more with one boy throwing the other under the table, while the third rocks his chair to pieces. I believe our music has tamed them all, they are such differ-

ent boys. Why did your cousin send his son up here instead of keeping him at home? I know very well his wife could not have wished it. Now tell me what you think."

"You may well believe that Vinzenz Lesa had some good reason," replied her husband. "But I have asked myself the same question and am unable to answer it. All I remember is that he told me something about some fault in the boy. When that man from Leuk asked if Vinzi's reserve and such-like annoyed us, I recalled that Vinzenz thought our boys were more interested in their work and wished his son were so, and thought a summer with us, in altogether different surroundings, might help him. He was right, for Vinzi is as gay as a lark now and makes everybody else merrier than they were."

The happy shouts of the returning boys were now heard, and the father went outside to help them, while the mother turned to the kitchen; she could now put the food on the table, and that would avoid impatience at waiting and prevent burned throats, too.

Next day the man from Leuk returned from Domo. As Lorenz seated himself by his side, the caller asked, "Now, what shall I report?"

"Tell my Cousin Vinzenz everything here is going along well," began Lorenz, "and say that his boy is happy. He sings and whistles like a bird in the seed fields, and we all join in."

"And that we love him as though he belonged to us," added Josepha. "Say that we want to keep him until the last days of autumn."

"Yes," agreed Lorenz, "and we would like it still better if he would leave the lad with us through the winter. He has not annoyed anyone on the whole mountain, but on the contrary, has made them all happy."

"Vinzenz Lesa will be glad to hear that," said the man, "and I will report to him all you say. Mrs. Lesa will ask how the boy is looking, but I suppose I will not be able to see him."

"No; the boys are all on the pasture from six in the morning till six in the evening, singing and playing the pipe, and wishing for nothing better," explained Lorenz. "That news will please my cousin better than if you had found the lad in the house."

"And tell his mother that she has no need to worry," continued Josepha. "Her boy is as lively as a brook trout, and if he were not, I would care for him as for one of my own boys."

"Now, that's fine," said the messenger from Leuk, well satisfied as he started on his way, happy at the news he could carry to Mrs. Lesa, who had urged him to inquire into the smallest details—many more than he could remember.

Vinzi had kept his promise to cut beautiful pipes for Jos and Faz, and there had been such a frenzy of practising that pipe-playing had come to be their sole entertainment.

They both realized that Vinzi played far better than they, and to learn just how he did it was their highest ambition. The piping began as soon as they reached the pasture in the morning, and continued uninterruptedly as long as the cows grazed peacefully. Jos and Faz were leaders among the herd boys round about, and when they did not appear on the other pastures, little by little the others sought them on their own, and soon the passion for music spread.

After the pipes had been whining and screeching against one another the players begged Vinzi to play so they could see how he did it. He was pleased to play as long as they desired and they crowded close around him to watch the action of his fingers. It seemed the melodies flowed forth of themselves; all Vinzi did was to let his

fingers skip lightly over the holes. It looked so simple, each boy thought now he could do it himself and wanted to be the first to play. When the expected success did not come, he would declare that if he had his own pipe and could practise long enough, things would be different; but who could do much when he could only keep the precious instrument for a few minutes; when there were always ten more eager to use it?

Hence one boy after another came to ask: "Vinzi, what will you take to cut me a good pipe too?"

And Vinzi always replied readily: "You don't need to give me anything, but you must wait a while for your pipe, as I have already promised to make several others."

His Cousin Lorenz was delighted to hear his boys talking in the evenings about how all the herders, even those as far up as the hospice, came down to their pasture to hear the pipe-playing, and that they wanted to learn as well as to listen. Vinzi was cutting so many pipes that there were two or three on each pasture, but there were so many boys that these did not suffice; each could only play a few notes before another boy wanted to see what he could do. It

took long practise and much patience to produce a correct note, and to play a real tune was beyond the ability of most of them. Thus it came about that the supreme wish of each boy herder was to own a pipe which Vinzi had carved, for the pipes the others made did not produce true tones.

Among the group of herders were ten or twelve who were called the Tower Boys. Vinzi was never sure how many of them there were, because only a few of them could come to the Lesa pasture at a time; as on the other pastures, some must always stay to watch the cattle. At first Vinzi thought the Tower Boys were all brothers, but then he found out that they were cousins and belonged to three households. Already he had made pipes for two of them for they had been especially eager to own the instruments. Then Black Vereli, so called on account of his black curly hair and dark skin, begged so earnestly for a pipe that Vinzi was unable to refuse and gave him one which was already finished, though many of the boys cried jealously, "The Tower Boys already have two!"

Black Vereli ran off with his prize with many thanks and shouts of joy.

The following day he came again and hurried up to Vinzi to say, "I have to watch the cows today, but I have a message for you. I showed grandfather the pipe and he had me play for him. When he said I didn't know how to play, I told him you could do it better than anyone else. Then he said you must soon pay him a visit and play for him. Go tomorrow, won't you?" he called back as he ran away.

That evening he told his cousin of the message that Black Vereli brought and asked what he should do about it.

"Go up to the Tower in the morning," said his cousin, explaining that the grandfather was the oldest man on the whole mountainside, and the people usually did what he wished.

"Whose grandfather is he?" asked Vinzi.

"Of those they call the Tower Boys," answered his cousin, "and of a lot more who remain at home. Only the boys who tend the cattle go up there in the summer. He is really their great, or even their great-great-grandfather. But that is too long a name, so all his relatives on the mountain call him grandfather. If all his grandchildren and great-grandchildren were together, it would make quite a crowd."

"Yes, and Black Vereli is the worst of the lot," added Faz.

"How so?" asked his father.

"Oh, the Tower Boys are forever playing all kinds of tricks and Black Vereli is the inventor of them all," explained Faz. "Jos only keeps in with him because he can yodel so well."

"Yes, so he can, better than any of them," confirmed Jos. "But I think the mischief will die down now he has something else to think about. Vinzi has made him a pipe and he is determined to practise until he can play on it. And when he wants a thing, he never gives up until he gets it."

"Those pipes are a real blessing to the whole mountain for they tame even the worst boys," said the mother, leaning back comfortably in her armchair.

The next morning when the boys were setting off with their herd, Lorenz Lesa said to Vinzi, "Go right up to the Tower, for grandfather goes out to his little bench at the first peep of dawn, and there he suns himself until evening. You will have to judge when to return, but stay as long as he wants you."

And then they were off, Russli a little in the

rear with Vinzi as always. He had listened attentively to his father's words and now said, "Come back soon. Come down to us again as soon as you have played for grandfather."

"You heard what your father said," returned Vinzi. "I must do just what the grandfather wishes. If he wants me to stay up there all the morning, that is what I must do."

"Then I'll tickle all the cows," threatened Russli quite savagely.

"That is wicked of you!" exclaimed Vinzi indignantly. "I always thought you were quite a nice boy. Haven't I stuck by you, told you stories and played tunes for you? I had begun to think that what Faz said about you was not true, but after all I do not know. Do you know what I am going to do? I am going to stay with Jos and Faz after this, and you can be by yourself; I'll not go with you any more."

"Then I won't do it," said Russli, half obstinately, half penitently.

"That's the right way, Russli," said Vinzi, easily appeased. "And I will carve out something on my way and bring it back for you. I'll do that every time I go away. Now what would you like, a walking stick?"

"No," came the decisive answer.

"A flagstaff then?"

"No."

"What would you like?"

"A pipe."

"You got one ever so long ago," asserted Vinzi.

"All the same I want another, and then another. I want a pipe every time you carve something for me," persisted Russli stubbornly.

"A pipe it shall be," promised Vinzi.

When they came to the pasture Jos and Faz drove the herd to the right of the road toward the larch trees, but Vinzi continued on his way. The three boys called out, "Come back soon," over and over again, and each time Vinzi waved his cap in answer, at last flinging it up in the air for sheer joy and shouting repeated hurrahs. Vinzi had never been so happy. The sun shone out of a cloudless blue sky over the green fields and rugged mountain cliffs where the dark firs lifted their branches. Yes, this was the way he had come, but how different it all looked today! The scene grew more and more beautiful. The snow-capped mountain reached out above the wooded heights. How great and mighty were

the gleaming snow-fields! Oh, how wonderful! Suddenly a broad stream of light, shining like a wide silver river, spread right across the entire mountain. It came without a rustle, without a movement. That was no flowing water; it was but a great glacier. Vinzi had to stand still as there flamed up a strange blue fire across the expanse. He was so filled with the beauty of it he could hardly pass on but at last he had to go. Then came the sound as of rustling woods, but there was no forest near. No, there was a waterfall, tumbling into white foam as it left the high cliff for the depths below; a second leaped down just as madly. Here and there boiling mountain streams rushed down from the walls of rock, and the air that was wafted to him was gloriously cool. He stood still and breathed in great draughts of it. But what was that glowing red field above on the mountain slope? He ran up to it, never noticing how steep was the way. Time and time again the red field disappeared when the road made a curve. Then it would stand out in the rays of the sun, always nearer, always brighter. Now came the tinkling of cow-bells, tuneful sounds well known to him. But where was the herd? He paused and

gazed around. Yes, there to the left the herd was grazing peacefully in a green pasture and with them were a number of young herders. In the middle of the valley rose the old gray stone tower that he had seen on his journey here and which his cousins had described to him. The grandfather sat leaning against the stone wall while he gazed up into the blue heavens. Hair snow white covered his bare head and a heavy white beard fell down to his chest. The old man sitting in the sunshine and the herd calmly grazing around him made a peaceful scene. Even the old tower which lived in his memory as a frightful thing now seemed a comfortable dwelling where the Tower Boys could lead a happy life with the grandfather. He wanted to see it all, but first he must find that red field.

Vinzi climbed hurriedly. Another bend in the road, and the bright red field lay before him. He climbed up to the right of the road and went in among the heavy green foliage. Everywhere were the glowing red alpine roses. As far as he could see, the slope was covered with the crimson flowers. "Oh, how beautiful!" Vinzi exclaimed over and over again to himself.

Treading softly, he discovered an open spot

where he would not bruise a plant, and here he seated himself in the midst of the flowers and gazed in silent rapture on the grandeur around him. The heavens spread their deep blue above the shimmering field of roses, the green alpine slopes and gray mountain peaks. The mighty mountain raised its snow-cap high into the air, and raging mountain streams threw their white foam and mist against the shining sun to show a wealth of rainbow color.

Vinzi must have sat dreaming a long time. Suddenly he noticed the sun was directly overhead; it must be near noon. Starting up in surprise, he ran in long leaps over the rose field, carefully choosing his way that he might not injure the blossoms. With a last leap he was again on the road and off in full speed to the meadow slope at the old tower. He brought up right before the grandfather who was still sitting on the bench in the warm sunshine but well protected from the wind. It took a moment for Vinzi to regain his breath, during which the grandfather asked calmly, "What's the matter, boy? What's your hurry?"

"I have been dawdling a bit. I meant to get here earlier," answered Vinzi, now able to

breathe easier. "Black Vereli told me I should come up here to you, that you wished me to play on my pipe."

"So you are the lad who carves these shawms, and who plays so well on them, they say?" said the aged man. "It is nice of you to come up to me. Sit down beside me and tell me to whom you belong and from where you come."

Vinzi seated himself and explained that while he lived in Leuk, he was staying a while with his cousin, Lorenz Lesa.

"I know him," said the old man. "He is a fine man. Did he have no objection to your coming?"

Vinzi told him it was his cousin himself who had bidden him come and had told him to stay as long as the grandfather wished.

"That's fine; then you can play something for me. But I'm thinking we should have a bite to eat first." Therewith the old man stood up but suddenly changed his mind, for he reseated himself comfortably in his place.

"I'm thinking it would not be out of place for the youngster to fetch the food while the old man keeps his seat," he said, giving Vinzi a friendly clap on the shoulder. "Just go around the

corner, open the door and you will find everything ready on the shelf, the food and a pitcher of milk. Bring it here."

Vinzi quickly came back and placed the food

on the bench between them. The grandfather cut bread and cheese for himself and invited Vinzi to do likewise.

"How do you like it on our mountain?" asked the grandfather in a few minutes.

Vinzi's eyes sparkled, as he said, "Oh, it is beautiful here! I never saw anything more lovely!" full of his recent impressions.

Well pleased, the grandfather patted him on the shoulder. "Neither did I; neither did I!" highly gratified. "You think as I do. Where could it be more beautiful? Where is there more golden sunshine than here? And air so invigorating that the whole body senses it at each breath! It gives one strength, this air and this sun. I can say this because I know something about it. Certainly my strength is failing but though no longer young I am still healthy. How old do you suppose I am, boy?"

"About seventy," declared Vinzi.

"So that's what you think? Why, I was seventy more than twenty odd years ago! I was young at that age. It was no trouble to carry a heavy load on my back down into the valley, and to carry a new load up. But I can't do that any more, and the young folks want me to do nothing more than to keep peace among the boys at the Tower during the summer. During the day they are with the herd, but they all come back to the Tower in the evening, and order has to be kept among them. Someone has

to be in command; otherwise things would go awry. During the day I sit here in the sunshine and have time to thank our dear God for everything he has done for me in my lifetime. Since I passed my ninetieth birthday I don't count the years any more. I take each lovely day as one of God's beautiful gifts and in the evening look up to Heaven and say from the bottom of my heart, 'I thank Thee for this day, good Father in Heaven; I thank Thee!' And when my time comes to go, it will not be far. Just look up and see what a short flight for me to be there. That is why I love it on this mountain; it is so near to Heaven and I can look out into the distance. One's thoughts go upwards and that makes both life and death happy things."

Vinzi was sorry when he ceased speaking, for he would have liked to learn much more about him.

"What are you thinking about?" asked the old man after a short silence.

"I was wishing you would tell me how you get along in winter when the herd boys have gone home. Do you dwell in the Tower all alone, or do you have to go away, when you could be so happy here?" said Vinzi.

"I have not gone down into the valley for the last ten years, and I am glad I do not have to," said the old man, drawing in a deep breath of the mountain air. "I could not stand the heavy air or the crowds. Neither do I live alone in the Tower, for I have good friends here, the monks in the hospice. You know where stands the hospice, don't you?"

"No," replied Vinzi, "and I don't even know what a hospice is."

"It is a kind house," explained the old man. "Travelers who can go no farther on account of the deep snow and the bitter cold are taken in there. Sometimes travelers who are half frozen lie down. Then the good monks in the hospice take them indoors to the warm fire and strengthen them with food and drink so they can continue on their journey. They are my kind friends, those monks; and when the boys travel off home with the herd in the autumn, I go to live at the hospice. It is not far, just above there; you can see it now."

"Oh, I remember it!" exclaimed Vinzi, as he recalled the great stone house on the road.

"There is always a warm corner in the fireplace ready for me," continued the grandfather.

"There I sit all through the winter and listen to the words of the kind monks. Now and again I see someone whom they have saved from a miserable death, buckling on his knapsack with fresh courage. I often hear about how the world is going on down below, and I am always happy to have escaped it all and to be up here."

"Yes, I can well believe that," said Vinzi, appreciatively.

"How would it be to play some tunes now?" asked the grandfather after a pause.

Pulling out his pipe, Vinzi began a melody that pleased the old man so he asked to hear it over again. When he had repeated it, the grandfather said, "That was very beautiful. Was it a hymn?"

"Yes, it was," said Vinzi.

"How do you come to know it? Young boys do not generally like to play hymns. Where did you find it?"

"I did not find it. I only imitate what I hear sung. Mother sings such hymns at home every evening," Vinzi informed him.

"Do you know more like it?" the aged man asked.

"Yes, yes; a lot of them," Vinzi assured him.

"I wonder if you can play a hymn I heard once, but never again. I would so love to hear it again. But all I can tell is how each stanza ends; perhaps you will know what it is by that."

"Or perhaps you can sing a little of the air," suggested Vinzi.

"No, no, my lad; I'm no longer able to sing," objected the grandfather, "but I can tell you what the hymn was about and how the refrain went. You see I was not always as happy as now. When I was a boy like you, I was happy for I had a mother who watched over me just as yours does. My father had died and I had comrades who wanted to go out into the world. I wanted to go with them. My mother did not wish it but I went. We traveled, sometimes as soldiers, sometimes as workmen. It was a wild life. But you do not understand anything about that. Finally I could stand no more and said, 'Let us turn back and start a new life.' But they would not, and so I returned home alone. It had been a long time since I had written to my mother, or had heard from her. When I arrived home I found she had died. 'Your going away was her death,' our neighbor said, and the words burnt into my soul. I determined to be-

gin a new life for then everything might come out right. But there was no happiness for me. Accusations seared my conscience like fire and once, when I could not sleep for remorse, I cried out to Heaven: 'Oh, mother, how ready you always were to help me! Though I do not deserve it, help me now!' On awakening in the morning I heard my mother's voice saying, 'Go to church, Klaus; the bell is ringing!' That is just what she always said every Sunday morning. I jumped out of bed and found it was actually Sunday. I had not been to church for a long while, but I went that day. At first I could not follow the pastor's words; they were not for me. But suddenly I heard, 'Then the Lord came down from Heaven bringing peace and forgiveness, so that we should not perish in our sins but enjoy everlasting happiness.' That was meant for me, and went through me like a ray of sunlight. Then came the hymn. I understood every word of it, for it told just how I felt. At the end of each stanza these words sounded as from a glad choir:

'Yes, the holy hymn of grace
Sounds through all eternity.'

"I have never forgotten it. From that day I have gone to church whenever the bells have pealed and I have listened to many a good word and have been happy ever since. Can you play that hymn for me?"

Vinzi would have been happy to do his bidding, but he did not know the song.

"Well," said the grandfather when he saw how sorry Vinzi was he could not fulfill his wish, "play one of your own for me; I will be glad to hear it."

Vinzi did this joyfully, and played one piece after another until a hubbub in the distance told that the herd boys were on their homeward way. Then he stood up quickly, asking if the grandfather minded if he left now. The old man declared it was high time he departed, but he could not understand how the time had flown. "Will you come again soon?" he asked. "Tell your Cousin Lorenz I am expecting you. I must say one thing more: Teach our boys to play on the pipe as you do, so we will have music worth hearing when you are gone."

Vinzi declared he was showing them every day how it was done but they did not bring out the notes clearly and smoothly so as to make a

melody. They learned to sing a song much sooner than they learn to play it on the pipe.

"Well, teach them to sing pretty songs, then; you must know any number of them. You know songs which are not hymns?"

"I have heard Cousin Lorenz sing a few, and I knew one before that, though I never had the words belonging to it," replied Vinzi.

"You are worse than I am; you are just a boy but already forget the words. You are too young to do that," was the grandfather's opinion.

"No, I have not forgotten them," said Vinzi quite seriously. "I never knew them."

The old man looked searchingly at the boy to see if he were joking, but Vinzi was much too earnest for that, so he asked: "How can you know a song if you do not know the words?"

"I know how they ought to sound, and a few of the words, but I cannot put them together so they will make a song. This morning when I sat among the roses, I heard the song and could sing it, but not the words. Oh, if only someone could make a song of it!" and Vinzi looked up at the old man with a strange craving on his face.

"Perhaps I know someone," replied the latter,

for something had occurred to him that might help Vinzi. "What would your song be about?"

"Why, about roses and the sunshine on them, the sunlight on the mountains and the foaming waters, and about all the beautiful things up there." Vinzi's eyes sparkled as he spoke, for all the while he kept hearing the melody that made his song and felt the urge to sing it aloud.

"Well, I'll tell Father Silvanus about it, and we'll see what he has to say about it," and with these words the grandfather shook Vinzi's hand and the boy ran off down the mountain.

Loud shouts came from the pump where the three boys were washing. They all pounced on him at once and wanted to know what he had done all day, at the same time telling him what had happened to them. In the middle of it all Russli tugged away at his coat, for he had something important to tell him. He was at last able to make himself heard and said, "I didn't lash one of them all day, not a single one."

And upon hearing this report, Vinzi drew a beautiful new pipe out of his pocket and gave it to the little fellow. He had attained such skill in carving pipes that he had made one while seated among the roses that morning.

Cousin Lorenz and his wife Josepha greeted him as heartily as though he had been away a long time and when he delivered the grandfather's message, his cousin said, "Yes, yes; go up there just as much as you please, only return to us each evening," and his wife added, "It would suit me if things would never change, and

if Vinzi could stay with us always."

A little later when Vinzi sat on the doorsill of the hayrick, he had so much to think about that it seemed he would never get to bed. The grandfather's history had made a deep impression on him, and while the old man had talked an idea had come to him that had kept growing more and more vivid. It seemed he must carry it out at once.

Taking up his pipe, Vinzi played softly to himself. Often the notes died away, and Vinzi hearkened dreamily as he hummed, trying to round out a melody. He gazed around him. All the houses were dark, but the stars shone so wonderfully bright that he hushed both pipe and voice and gazed up at the sky in silent devotion.

"Oh, now I know it!" he exclaimed suddenly, and lifting his shawm again enticed from it a series of jubilant notes. Then he closed his little door, stepped to his fragrant bed of hay and lay down in whole-hearted satisfaction. But now wonder-music seemed to begin again and it seemed that angelic choirs were singing to him from the starlit heavens, but Vinzi heard it in a dream for as soon as his head had touched the pillow the boy was fast asleep.

CHAPTER VII

STILL MORE MUSIC

AND now each morning there was a song rehearsal on the pasture, for Vinzi had organized a choir among the boys who had good voices. Some of them could not sing, and others would not, but that was not amiss for some had to watch the herd while the rest practised.

Vinzi had long known that Jos and Vereli had the best voices, and he chose them as leaders of his choir, Jos of the high voices, Vereli of the low, and they did their work capitally. They also helped in keeping order, for as soon as the lads learned anything by heart, they wanted to begin singing as soon as Vinzi had given the keynote on his shawm and did not like to be restrained. Jos and Vereli understood this was not according to Vinzi's wishes, and often had much ado to keep the noisy singers quiet until their time came.

Thus the week passed and Sunday came, the day Vinzi had chosen to carry out his project. Had his choir not been sufficiently well trained

he would gladly have waited another week, for Sunday it must be, in order to fulfil his plan.

Jos and Vinzi marched up the mountain with their troupe of singers. The procession grew as it advanced, other boys joining them from the scattered cottages along the way. Some who were not singers came too, just to listen and to see what happened.

As usual, the grandfather was sitting on his bench in the warm sunshine, letting the refreshing mountain breeze fan his ruddy cheeks. He looked questioningly on the approaching crowd. Vinzi, Jos and Vereli were in the lead and came up to within a few feet of the old man. The others grouped themselves about and Vinzi began to play a merry tune. But soon the notes changed into a sadder strain, and finally sounded like real lamentations, as though someone were begging for mercy. Here the choir joined in and sang softly, as though to awake hope with the words:

"Yes, the holy hymn of grace,"

and then the shawm again sounded its plaintive strain until the choir repeated in louder and fuller volume:

"Yes, the holy hymn of grace."

Once more came the pleading tones of the pipe, but when the chorus took up the refrain again it was in loud rejoicing:

"Yes, the holy hymn of grace
Sounds through all eternity,"

and in unison voices and shawm concluded in a triumphant song of joy.

There was a moment of intense silence; the grandfather sat speechless, hands folded over his knees. Then one of the boys ran off, others quickly followed, and then the whole crowd rapidly dispersed over the green meadow where a large herd of cows from the valley was grazing under the care of comrades of the choir boys. Vereli alone remained with Jos and Vinzi, but he also suddenly disappeared; he never did stay long where absolute quiet reigned. When the grandfather at last looked up it seemed he had just returned from far away.

"You sang a beautiful song for me," he said kindly. "Where did you find it? Of course, Vinzi, you taught it to the others?"

"I got it from you," replied Vinzi.

"Hm, hm!" muttered the grandfather. "You

seem to understand what is said to you. But the music, where did you find it?"

"That came to me because I wanted to sing the hymn you could no longer remember," explained Vinzi.

"It is good of you to wish to give pleasure to an old man. But wait! I had almost forgotten something," and the grandfather fumbled around in his pockets. "I have thought of you too, and told Father Silvanus about your wanting a certain kind of song. You can see how kind he is, for he has brought it to me already. But he made one condition: if you find the tune for it, you must go up there and sing the song to him. Here it is at last," and he pulled out a long sheet of paper.

As Vinzi took it, the grandfather continued, "Now I have something more to say. Jos, you know the cellar. Go, bring me the cheese which has been cut and one of the large loaves of bread. Vinzi will go with you, for it will be too heavy for you to carry alone. Take it out to the boys who sang to me. They are sure to be on the pasture. You have given me a feast; now hold one for yourselves. Take a cup from the kitchen and take turns drinking. Xaver will milk."

The grandfather always called Vereli by his surname Xaver, for the boy's father and grandfather, his own first-born son, had been called by the same name.

The two boys ran off to carry out his commission, and their burdens made them pant as they came up the steep cellar stairs. In spite of that they hurried off with happy faces.

"Come back again, boys," said the grandfather, as they held out their hands in grateful farewell. "Make another happy Sunday for me."

The pair really did find the singers on the great open pasture space, and the Tower Boys were with them. Shouts of joy welcomed the laden messengers, and the whole crowd quickly sat down on the grass and the feast started, for boys have astonishing appetites, and many of those from the little cottages had only potatoes for their daily fare.

Vinzi sat down behind the boys for he wished to be alone, to read the words of the song. Would the melody he had heard so clearly fit itself to the words? On drawing out the paper, he found the writing so plain it was very easy to read and he read the words over and over again. Suddenly such a longing gripped him that he

could not sit there any longer. He must go up to the field of roses, to listen to the melody and to sing it to himself. He slipped quietly away from the boys who were engrossed in their eating and drinking and ran up the mountain until he reached the sunny field. Seating himself in his former place, alpine roses on every side of him, he pulled out the paper again and read:

Behold on high in beaming sun
The glowing clouds like roses,
No thorns to mar the beauty there,
No other flower can compare
To that glowing as of roses.

In beaming sun as in delight
Foams the cascade from rocky height,
Garbed in a cloak of spotless white,
Dauntless and shimmering in its flight
Foams the cascade from rocky height.

In beaming sun in glowing rays,
How proudly stand those peaks!
While mortals frail oft go astray
And soon, alas, must pass away,
Forever stand those peaks.

Within the glow of beaming sun
How soon all sorrows cease!
Oh, valley-dwellers, 'tis Heaven's call,
Will ye not hearken one and all?
For there your sorrows cease.

It was so late that night when Vinzi came running down the mountain that he found the entire family had gathered in front of the house to watch for his coming. Jos had returned several hours before and had told how the grandfather had enjoyed the singing and had shown his hospitality by providing a feast, and how Vinzi had suddenly disappeared from the pasture where they had eaten it.

"Vinzi, Vinzi!" his cousin called out as he saw him coming. "We had almost begun to believe you had run away."

"I certainly never would do that!" Vinzi assured him, all out of breath. "I was sitting up there among the alpine roses and entirely forgot the time."

"Perhaps you made some pipes?" asked Russli.

"Tomorrow, Russli, tomorrow for that," said Vinzi with understanding, as the father hurried them into the house. He wanted a little Sunday music too, he said, but first of all they must have supper.

Vinzi spent many happy hours in his rose field during the following days, and was able to do so with a clear conscience. Jos knew what

was in course of preparation, and it was he who sent Vinzi up there every morning immediately they reached the pasture, so he could have long hours in which to compose the new song. Jos found it hard to wait until it was ready to be practised.

Vinzi called his chorus together in a few days, and this time everything went so well that their progress seemed really wonderful to him. They had only to listen to the melody the shawm played, and then they sang all the song, for the tune quickly caught and pleased the ear, and they carried it through with great zest.

Vinzi had to accompany the song only a few times with Jos and Vereli as leading voices until the herd boys all over the different pastures could sing it. As soon as they gathered in the morning, one boy would call out to the other, "Let's sing our song!" for it was the general feeling that it was their very own.

The next Sunday the boys proceeded up to the grandfather, who had heard something about the proposed visit. He watched the approaching procession with pleasure. It was much larger than on the first occasion, and the boys were so enthusiastic that they hardly waited

until they reached his bench to begin their song and their voices increased in power to its end.

"Bravo! Bravo!" exclaimed the delighted grandfather. "Sing it again!"

Instantly the lively singers repeated it with undiminished power.

When Vinzi found that the song was going so well, he tugged at Jos's sleeve, and he in turn signalled to Vereli who stood close by, and the three slipped away like lizards. This plan had been agreed upon as Vinzi desired to carry out the grandfather's commission; but he thought it would be improper to make much noise near the quiet hospice above, and if his chorus knew what he and his two companions had in mind, the whole crowd would run after them.

Having once gained the road, the three boys soon reached the great stone building which Vinzi remembered so well. When they stood in the doorway, Vereli gave the bell-cord such a jerk that the clang sounded all through the building. A small old man opened the door a little.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"To see Father Silvanus," replied Vereli quickly.

Peering at the three boys rather suspiciously, the old doorkeeper said with deliberation, "Such boys! To want to summon Father Silvanus for a joke! What do you want of him?"

"Let's go," suggested Vinzi softly. "Father Silvanus certainly has no time for us."

But Vereli was not so easily put off and said unabashed, "We carry a message from grandfather and wish to give it to Father Silvanus himself, as we were told to do."

At this the old man opened the door a little wider and let the three boys step in. "You can wait here," said he abruptly and went down the dim passage.

The boys heard his shuffling step long after he was out of sight, and after a while other footsteps, firm and rapid, approaching.

"That's Father Silvanus!" exclaimed Vereli, but already the priest stood before them in his long robe and gazed at them searchingly.

"You are one of the boys at the Tower; you bear their mark," he said to Vereli. "Who are your companions?"

"This boy belongs to Lorenz Lesa and the other one is his cousin, Vinzi Lesa of Leuk."

A peculiar smile flitted over the priest's face

on hearing the latter name, and looking at Vinzi, he said pleasantly, "Come along with me."

He led them down the long corridor, opened a door in the rear and invited all three to enter. It was a very large room with dark panelled walls, against which stood ancient leather chairs with high backs. In the center of the room was an immense square table, but Vinzi's eyes had been instantly attracted by something in the corner and he kept gazing at it. It looked like Alida's piano, only taller.

The priest now stood right in front of the boys and inquired what the grandfather desired.

Vinzi felt that it was his duty to report and said if the kind father wished it, they would be pleased to sing the song which he had given the old man.

"Good! I will be pleased to listen," said the priest, and when he noticed that Vinzi hesitated, he added, "Do you want to ask something else, lad?"

"Shall I sing with them, or shall I play?"

"Play, play; I must hear the shawm too," said Father Silvanus with a kindly smile.

Instantly the music started, and Vinzi, sure of his two singers and gaining courage from the

priest's kind manner, did not play the melody, but an accompaniment which he had often practised by himself.

When the song was at an end, Father Sil-

vanus looked at Vinzi with real affection. Placing his hand on the boy's shoulder and gazing straight into his eyes, he said, "My boy, I want to know something; tell me the truth about it. Had you heard the tune you have just been playing, or a similar one, perhaps, with other words?"

"No; the melody belongs entirely to this one. I did not find it until after I got your words from grandfather," answered Vinzi innocently, looking up into his questioner's face with his large, honest eyes.

"Will you sing all the verses again for me? And I want your accompaniment too."

Highly pleased, the three boys repeated it.

"Good!" exclaimed Father Silvanus. "Now you shall hear how my harmonium plays it. I wonder if you will like it."

He went up to the tall organ in the corner, opened it and started to play. Vinzi listened with bated breath. What wonderfully touching notes they were!

Was it possible? It sounded so familiar! Yes, that was his own melody, and the accompaniment of the shawm with it. But how deep and how full! Even after the notes had died away, Vinzi stood in silent ecstasy.

Father Silvanus looked at him with a smile and asked pleasantly, "Should it sound like that, my boy? Was it correctly played?"

"Oh, it was much more beautiful than ours!" exclaimed Vinzi, still overpowered.

"But it was your song, my lad; I added but

little to it," said the priest in kindest accents. "Come up closer; did you never hear this kind of instrument?"

"No," answered Vinzi as he stepped up and examined the harmonium closely, "but I have heard a piano."

The priest questioned him further, so Vinzi told about the few music lessons he had enjoyed with Alida. The priest smiled sympathetically and, stroking the boy's curly black hair, he asked,"My lad, would it give you pleasure to learn to play my instrument?"

In his intense happiness Vinzi could not be sure he had heard aright, so just looked mutely up at the priest with flashing eyes.

"You mean to say yes?"

"A thousand times yes!" Vinzi exclaimed.

"Good! Ask your Cousin Lorenz what he has to say about it and bring me the answer tomorrow morning. If he has no objection we can play a little every morning."

Shaking hands with each boy and saying a kind word to him, Father Silvanus opened the door. Once outside, the trio went merrily down the mountain, but Vinzi moved along as though in a dream and left the lively conversation to

Jos and Vereli. He could hear nothing but the kind words of Father Silvanus: "Would it give you pleasure to learn to play my instrument?" Give pleasure? It would be happiness beyond his conception.

Vereli had said good-bye and turned off to the Tower without Vinzi noticing it, and the two boys were soon home. At the supper table Jos recounted everything that had happened and told how kind Father Silvanus had been and his plan for Vinzi, if his father consented.

"Of course," said the latter. "I am very pleased if Vinzi can learn something beautiful."

So early the next morning Vinzi went up to Father Silvanus and with a radiant face informed him of his cousin's verdict.

"Then we will start at once," said the priest and led the way to the great room and organ.

This lesson was quite different from those Alida had given, and the teacher had as little idea of the flight of time as the pupil. One hour, then a second was gone when the ringing of a bell reminded the priest of the time. He quickly closed his instrument, shook Vinzi's hand and said, "We will continue tomorrow. Come as early as you did today."

Vinzi departed so full of his good fortune that he had to run to the grandfather at once to tell him of all the unexpected and unbelievable things which had happened.

Each day now grew more lovely for Vinzi. The further Father Silvanus took him in his art, the greater his desire to proceed. When the priest had to leave Vinzi, he permitted his pupil to remain at the organ to practise, and there he would sit for hours. He was never disturbed by any sound in the silent house and time passed unnoticed. When the sun's rays gleamed at a certain angle above the organ, he knew evening was near, and then he closed the instrument and slipped quietly through the passage and out to the road. This left him just sufficient time for a visit to grandfather, and then a quick run down to his cousins and their comrades, where his coming always created jubilation. Ear splitting noises always followed his arrival, for every owner of a pipe wanted Vinzi to hear what he had learned to play. Vinzi could not help wondering how the number of pipes had increased so during the time he had not been coming to the pasture. Had the boys discovered how to make them, or where did they get them?

His bargain with Russli was not forgotten. The little fellow was at his side every morning as they started out and every evening as they returned he claimed his new pipe.

"Russli, you have pipes enough now," remarked Vinzi one day as he wandered along behind the cows with his little comrade on the homeward way. "By this time you should have learned not to worry the cows without always expecting a pipe as a reward."

"And so I have," assented Russli, "and, besides, I have so much to do."

Vinzi was surprised at this statement for he had been so mischievous only because he had much idle time on his hands. So he inquired, "What have you to do?"

"I will show you, but no one else must know," answered Russli mysteriously, and he led Vinzi off the road over to the old larches.

"Tell me one other thing," Vinzi began again. "Have you piled the pipes in a heap, or have you given them away to the herd boys who have none? So many of them have good pipes now, not like those they would carve for themselves."

"I have given away no pipes," replied Russli in a tone of resentment, for he was hurt that

Vinzi should question his good sense. "You can see for yourself."

As he spoke the words Russli bent over and lifted up several pieces of moss-covered earth which had been so cleverly packed together the ground had looked untouched. Laying them carefully to one side, he scraped away the loose earth beneath and disclosed a large hole. He turned back a strong paper which had been folded as a cover, allowing Vinzi to look inside, and there he saw a collection of all kinds of objects: a pile of nuts, some prunes, boxes of matches, colored marbles, old knives and tobacco boxes, a little pump, a leather purse, and a brass watch chain.

"What is this, Russli? To whom do these things belong?" asked Vinzi in astonishment.

"To me. I exchanged each piece with the boys for a pipe. Now do you see?" And Russli looked quite proudly at his stock-in-trade.

"But what are you going to do with all this?" asked the bewildered Vinzi.

"Keep it until I exchange it for something better. You know the pipes are only wood," said Russli confidentially.

Vinzi laughed and said, "You must become a

merchant, Russli, for you seem to understand all about trade. But now you won't have anything more to do, because our bargain is ended."

"Oh, yes, I'll have much to do every day," said Russli importantly. "Every morning I have to open the hole and clear away the earth to count over my things to see that nothing has been stolen in the night. Then it all has to be packed again and covered over and the moss firmly set so no one will notice the place. In the afternoon I have to sit close by and watch so no one discovers it and starts digging."

Vinzi did not have any trading instinct and so the enthusiasm that urged Russli to such constant efforts to guard his treasures was beyond his understanding. However, he was well satisfied that these new activities took up the little chap's time. At least he left the cows in peace and did it without the prospect of new pipes.

The month of August passed and the first autumn mists descended upon the mountains. Several times messages had come up from Leuk that it would soon be time for Vinzi to return home; they had imposed long enough on the kindness of their relatives. Would their cousin take the first opportunity of sending the boy

home with some one? Each time word was sent back to Leuk that the summer was not over, that no one wanted to let Vinzi go, that he was well and happy. Wouldn't his parents permit him to stay a little longer on the mountain?

One day toward evening Father Lorenz entered the house and found his wife preparing supper in her usual easy way. He seated himself in a chair for he had no special work to do until the boys returned with the cattle. For a while he sat deep in thought, then asked, "Have you noticed, Josepha, how Vinzi has changed?"

"How so?" she inquired.

"With one bound he seems to have grown a whole year older, perhaps two," explained Lorenz. "And this has happened since he has been spending most of his time with Father Silvanus. I notice it in everything he does: the way he plays, sings, and talks. It is as though he had stepped from shadow into sunshine."

"I don't quite understand what you mean," replied his wife, "but I have always said Vinzi looks as fresh and trim as a young apple tree. And now I will say this: If Vinzi were a beggar-boy, I'd adopt him and love him as much as my

other three. I can say that truthfully."

"Yes, you can say that," responded her husband with a smile. "But, you know, if the lad were a vagabond and had no mother, he would not be the boy he is. He comes from parents who look after their children and has lived in an orderly household. That's why he is the boy he is."

Heavy steps approached the door at this moment, but it was not the tramping of the boys, which was always accompanied with loud yodels, so Lorenz went to open the door and asked, "Who is there?"

A large, powerful man whom he at once recognized as a dealer in fruit at Leuk held out his hand and said, "I haven't seen you for a long time, Lesa. How are things going with you? I come on an errand for your cousin in Leuk."

Lorenz was disturbed at these words, for he felt sure his old friend had come on Vinzi's account. He often drove over the mountain and yet scarcely ever turned out of his way to call on him. However, he invited him to step in and make himself comfortable while they talked.

The fruit dealer explained that this was impossible as he had left his cart standing on the

road, and his horses were none the tamest. He must deliver his message as quickly as he could: Vinzenz Lesa had wanted to write a letter, but had not had the time after he had heard that a wagon was going over the mountain. He had had barely time to tell him he wished he would bring his son down with him, for it was time he returned. The fruit dealer added that he would return in two days, when his business would be done, and would then take the boy along with him.

Lorenz could say nothing, he was so dumbfounded at the thought that Vinzi must go.

"Well, Lesa, good-bye until Thursday. I may be here as early as eight o'clock in the morning," and the man looked questioningly at his silent host. "You understand me, don't you?"

"Yes, yes, only too well!" answered Lorenz. "The boy shall be ready; you will not have to wait for him, you may depend upon that."

He accompanied the man out to where his great wagon stood, loaded with sacks and drawn by four strong horses. Just as it drove off with a loud tinkling of bells, the boys came driving their herd, singing and shouting at the cattle. Should he tell those merry boys the distressing

news? It would put an end to their happiness, he knew that. He had a soft heart, and could not bring himself to do it, so he greeted the boys cheerfully and things went along just as usual.

After supper came the time for singing, for this had grown to be a custom in the house. They sang as happily as birds in spring, all but the father, for tonight there was a heavy load on his heart. He kept thinking, "I must tell them tonight. The time is too short to wait any longer." At last came the moment for the mother to say, as she did every evening, "Now we must stop; it has struck nine." Then he broke the news hurriedly in a few unmistakable words, and they all received it silently, with surprise and sorrow. The mother was the first to find her tongue.

"Of course you told him it was out of the question to let Vinzi go day after tomorrow?" she said with an emotion altogether unusual with her. "I can't understand what he means, to come and take the boy away, as though his leaving didn't amount to anything, the way one might tear a switch out of a hedge. Surely, you told him so?"

"The man did not come to do us any harm,"

said her husband. "You must not forget that Vinzi's parents have the right to summon him home, and one cannot deny that this was a good opportunity."

By this time the boys had recovered sufficiently to express their feelings, and they raised such an outcry that their father declared the best thing for them was to go to bed; things would look brighter after a night's rest.

Vinzi had remained silent all this while and now as he sat on his door sill and gazed up at the stars he was swayed by conflicting emotions. He was happy at the thought that he would soon see his mother and Stefeli, and his father too. Perhaps the latter would be kindly disposed toward him again, as in the old days Vinzi remembered so well. Then his father would let him ride on his knees, and would say to him, "Now, Vinzi, lively! As soon as you can ride well, you shall have a horse." Vinzi was not quite sure just when his father had begun to change in his attitude toward him, nor did he know why.

On the other hand, there was the sadness that for him all this lovely mountain life was at an end. He must leave all these kind people. And

then the music! Yes, all the music! With whom could he continue his music at home? There was no one. Must all this be ended for him forever? His heart sank within him at the thought, but next moment it pulsated with the thought of going home and seeing those he loved.

Even if he must forget all about music at home, thought Vinzi to himself, he would surely be able to go up to Father Silvanus again some day, and this was his last consoling thought as he fell asleep.

The next morning there was no time for any discussion as they had to be off to the pasture as early as possible. Jos and Faz were already off for the cows, and Vinzi was ready to follow with Russli when his Cousin Lorenz drew him to one side and said in a low voice, "It has to be, Vinzi, and you will be glad to get home. I wanted to tell you so that you could bid good-bye to Father Silvanus and to the grandfather this morning."

Vinzi knew his cousin's words were final, and he went off in silence, which did not please Russli at all.

"Say something to me," said the little boy petulantly, after they had walked a short distance.

"I can't talk very well," replied Vinzi, "something is choking me. But don't be unhappy, for when I get home I will send you something nice for your little shop."

"You needn't go home," declared Russli confidently. "Faz has thought of something to do so you need not go. He told Jos about it at the pump. Early tomorrow morning he will go up the road and wait for the wagon. When it stops he will climb up into the seat and say that he is the boy from Leuk. Then the man will drive on, and when they have gone some distance along the other side of the mountain, he will jump off the wagon and say he is not the right boy after all, and run back. Now don't you see? The man can't do anything then, for it will be too far for him to come back."

Vinzi was not at all convinced that this plan would prevent his trip home, but he felt deeply moved at the thought of Faz taking so much pains to keep him. He had really had less to do with Faz than with the other two boys.

'What are you going to send me for my shop?" inquired Russli later.

"I shall not tell you," replied Vinzi. "It must be a surprise; then it will please you better."

"Is it something to eat?" persisted Russli.

"No, nor anything to drink," answered Vinzi. "But I will tell you no more about it, or it will be no surprise."

At the pasture Vinzi parted from Russli and went on to the hospice as usual. He had been instructed always to go at once to the great room and there await Father Silvanus. He always came quickly. But this morning Vinzi did not stand before the harmonium with sparkling eyes in happy expectation, as he always did when the priest stepped in. Today his pupil was quite downcast and when the priest looked at him questioningly, Vinzi informed him that this would be the last time he would come; he was going home the next day.

"Oh, what a pity, what a *real* pity!" exclaimed Father Silvanus slowly. "But you can keep up your music at home, can't you?"

Vinzi fought back the tears, though his eyes filled in spite of him as he answered, "No, I believe not."

"Keep up your courage, my boy!" advised Father Silvanus, patting him kindly on the shoulder. "Keep up your courage! It is always lovely to go home, and if the Lord thinks music

is good for you, it is an easy thing for Him to send someone across your path who will help you further. Perhaps you will return to us and we will go on with your music together."

The priest shook his hand in a fatherly way and accompanied him to the door, where he gave the lad his blessing, saying heartily: "May God watch over you!" and then sent him on his way.

Vinzi was scarcely able to stammer his thanks, he had to fight so hard to keep back the tears, and he was most grateful to the priest for making his farewell so short, he could not have controlled himself much longer. Perhaps Father Silvanus had perceived that fact.

Vinzi gazed around him again and again. The mist began to lift, and everything grew clearer in the sunshine—the snow-capped mountain, the cascade, the rocky cliffs, and above them all was the deep blue of the heavens. He looked at it all once more, then ran off to the Tower.

The grandfather had come out when the fog lifted, and was again seated on his bench.

"You've come early today, and that is right," he called out to the approaching boy. "But what's wrong, what is the matter?" he added as

he came up close. When Vinzi explained, he said, "But we will be glad that you could stay this long. It has been my hope that you could come and sing my hymn for me when I go to my heavenly home. But perhaps I will be here till next summer, and then you will come back again. We will say good-bye with that thought," and the grandfather shook hands with Vinzi in a hearty way, saying his cousin would be expecting him, and he did not wish to detain him.

Vinzi hurried toward the house, thinking that the grandfather might be right. In the meanwhile, Cousin Josepha had been persuaded that Vinzi must go, and she rejoiced when she saw him coming so soon. It would give her a chance to talk with him, and that was necessary in order for her to regain her usual calm, for this sudden leave-taking had quite upset her.

When they had sat together and chatted as on the day of his arrival, her complacent mood was fully restored as Vinzi assured her he had no greater desire than to come up to the mountain again, live in her house, and occupy his lovely sleeping quarters.

When the family were all sitting together that evening, Father Lorenz said, "Singing is the best

means of driving away sad thoughts," and began a song himself. The others joined in, and the music continued until bedtime.

The next morning things did not go just as Faz had planned. The brothers were ready to go to the pasture and were saying good-bye when the continuous cracking of a whip on the road told Father Lorenz that the fruit dealer was arriving earlier than he had said.

Vinzi climbed up to his high seat, and he called a separate farewell to Lorenz, Josepha and the three boys, after which the horses started off. Truly sad at heart, all five watched the departing Vinzi, Russli feeling the least grief because of the surprise he had in prospect.

When the wagon reached the spot from which the Tower in the meadow was visible, the road was suddenly lined with a crowd of noisy boys. More and more kept coming, and finally they lifted a shrill "Hurrah!" and then shouted over and over again, "Come again!" so lustily that all four horses reared.

Down below the grandfather sat on his bench and waved his hat high in the air and Vinzi answered by swinging his.

A window was opened in the hospice above,

and a hand waved a friendly farewell to Vinzi; the hand of Father Silvanus.

One more stretch up the mountain, past the wild beeches and gnarled old fir-trees, and then came the quick descent to the valley.

CHAPTER VIII

MORE UNEXPECTED EVENTS

STEFELI'S summer was more pleasant than had seemed possible when Vinzi went away. Mr. Delrick never started on one of his long walks without asking, "Is Stefeli coming with me?"

As Stefeli did not go to the pasture after Vinzi had left, the mother never lost an opportunity to send her outdoors with Mr. Delrick, for the little girl fretted because she had to sit about the house so much. She was always highly pleased when she heard the welcome question and could lay aside the knitting of the long stocking to skip about in the meadows. Stefeli told her escort all sorts of things, what she had done out on the pasture, and all about the life in the home, as well as the ambitions and ideals of father, mother, Vinzi and herself.

It was in this way that Mr. Delrick learned the history of the Lesa family, but he became intimate with the life of the three members of the household in another manner also.

Vinzenz Lesa liked to spend his leisure evening hours on the bench outside the door, where he could enjoy the pleasant odor of the walnut leaves wafted to him on the evening air. There he smoked his pipe, and was pleased when Mr. Delrick sat beside him and they discussed the topics of the day.

With Mrs. Lesa he held an altogether different kind of conversation. Their talk always concerned the same subject, and that was Vinzi. She had told him how all Vinzi's happiness from early childhood had been centered on music, and how his father had centered his ambition in the determination that the boy should follow in his footsteps.

Mr. Delrick had deep sympathy for the mother, and tried to comfort her by saying that young lads such as Vinzi often evince an enthusiasm, only to drop it when a happy future lay before them, such as had come to Vinzi. At the same time he understood how anxiety pervaded her days and how her thoughts would dwell on the subject. And since he believed it lightened the mother's heart to discuss the matter, he often led their conversation back to Vinzi, and listened sympathetically to all she said.

In this way he had become the special friend and confidant of each member of the house, and Stefeli, as well as her father and mother, would say, "We will have to ask Mr. Delrick; he is sure to know," whenever a question came up which they could not answer at once; or when there was something they worried about, they would say, "We must consult Mr. Delrick; he can certainly advise us."

Therefore when the good news came down from the mountain that both old and young loved Vinzi and that he had brought them all great happiness, Mr. Delrick took as lively an interest in the report as though he belonged to the family. The mother listened in silence but both he and the father expressed the hope that the boy had begun to find joy in those things which were connected with his future career, and now Mr. Delrick prayed that the little family to which he had become so attached was to be reunited and find happiness before he left them.

The day came when Father Lesa told his wife in the presence of Mr. Delrick that he had met an old friend who was driving to the mountain, and he had instructed him to bring Vinzi

back, and they should arrive in five days.

The mother's heart throbbed with joy and Stefeli in her excitement could not sit still, but ran about restlessly. She kept counting the days, thinking they could not be lived through, but wonderful to relate the fifth day arrived with unexpected swiftness. She had just returned from a walk with Mr. Delrick when her father came in from the field and said, "Vinzi may arrive at any minute. Let us have supper ready so he can sit down with us."

Mr. Delrick was summoned, and they began to eat, though Stefeli could scarcely swallow her food, and things went no better with her mother.

"Here he comes!" suddenly cried the child and she dashed out of the door.

None of the others had heard anything, but a few moments afterward Stefeli came in triumphantly holding Vinzi by the hand. The joy of the parents was not expressed in words, but one could easily see the father's pride as he looked at his son and led him up to Mr. Delrick.

The latter gave him a keen look, for his mind had dwelt on the lad for many weeks and now he thought, "I can easily understand why the mother is so devoted to him and how his father's

hopes center in him, for he is certainly a fine appearing lad."

His father asked how he had liked the pasture up there and Vinzi described in ecstasy how the violets ladened the air with their perfume and tall larches spread their wide branches over the moss-covered stones, while the cows grazed so peacefully that their bells tinkled softly like a song of peace.

His mother asked if he had found pretty flowers up there too, and Vinzi waxed still more enthusiastic as he told how the field of roses made such a vivid glow it looked like fire.

Vinzi also described his sleeping quarters and said how dear the place had become to him—the little house that was filled with the fragrance of the haymow.

Both father and mother were amazed at their boy; he had never spoken with such assurance and enthusiasm. The mother thought, "Our Vinzi is not the same as when he left us. He has begun a new life. What will happen now?" The father had much the same impression for he said to himself, "Vinzi is different. He has found himself and knows what he wants."

The next morning Stefeli was up bright and

early, for the joy of knowing Vinzi was home banished sleep. Just as she was about to knock on his door, it opened and Vinzi stepped out dressed and ready for the day.

Stefeli drew back in astonishment and exclaimed, "You're up frightfully early! You didn't use to do so and I was going to call you."

"Well, you see now I can do it too," said Vinzi, laughing at her surprise. "I always got up very early on the mountain. When one is impatient for the happiness the day is to bring, one is glad to jump out of bed. It's a habit with me now."

"What made you so happy up there?"

"Come along and I'll tell you about it," said Vinzi, going downstairs.

His father stood in the doorway, to forecast the weather, for he had just stepped out of his bedroom. Now he turned around.

"What, already?" he said in surprise. "That is a good sign. You learned something up there, Vinzi, that is worth while, for you did not use to be the first one up in the morning. Come, let us stroll over to the walnut trees until mother calls us to breakfast. The trees are making splendid growth, and the grass is thick under them too. Perhaps you can see that things here

at home are lovely too, better than you did before. Do you?"

"Oh, yes!" declared Vinzi with his whole heart, looking up at the dense foliage of the walnut trees, under which he had always liked to tarry.

"You have seen how fine farm life is up there, and have learned to enjoy it. It is just as fine down here with us, and to cultivate a farm such as ours and to call it one's own is best of all."

"I could wish for something even better than that," said Vinzi with hesitation and then was silent.

His father looked at him in consternation.

"Listen, Vinzi! I am glad you have been happy up on the mountain; I haven't a word to say against it, but I am wondering what you have found up there that is better than what is down here. Tell me what it is."

"The loveliest thing up there is the harmonium in the hospice, and above everything else in the world I wish to learn to play it as Father Silvanus does."

Vinzenz Lesa darted a piercing look at his son. He stood silent a while, then: "Do you really mean what you say, Vinzi, or is it a joke?"

"I really mean just what I say," replied Vinzi.

"Well, then," said his father, "I will say something so you will know what I think of the matter. I sent you up the mountain to learn from a merry lot of boys how to enjoy farm work, for you really must learn to like it. I believed your eyes had been opened, that you had found yourself and come to your senses. But now I find you are every bit as childish as when you went away, with nothing but nonsense about music in your head. I hope I'll find a way to bring you to your senses yet and to make you see your good fortune. I certainly never thought you could get such fancies up there. You shall never go up there again. I'll find some other remedy."

Vinzi listened quietly to all his father said, though the words seemed to crush him, and when his father turned and went back to the house, he threw himself on the ground and tried to stifle his sobs by burying his face in the grass. He had surmised all along that his father would ignore his wishes about music and had cherished no hope of any other outcome. But he had firmly counted on returning to the mountain, and now that prospect was gone.

"Vinzi, you are to—" but Stefeli's voice suddenly ceased as she came nearer and heard him sobbing. "Oh, Vinzi, what is the matter?" she

asked. "You must come into the house. If you can stop going on like this you must come to breakfast. Father is already at the table and mother sent me to fetch you quickly."

Vinzi jumped up and ran over to the pump, and bathed his eyes again and again to remove all traces of tears.

"You're all right; come along now," urged Stefeli. "Mr. Delrick never comes down to breakfast, father takes no notice and mother will say nothing. Do come along!"

The two went in, and when Vinzi took his seat with bowed head, his father gave him one keen glance. Then he pushed away his half-empty cup, rose, and went outdoors. The sight of tears always upset Vinzenz Lesa, particularly those of his son, who was more precious to him than all his possessions.

"What is the matter with father?" asked the mother, and when Vinzi raised his head she exclaimed, "Oh, and what is the matter with you?"

Try as he would, Vinzi could not say a word, and laying his head on his arms, he sobbed aloud.

Stefeli swallowed her milk and ran out of the room to escape the sight of her mother's anxious face. "Oh, if Mr. Delrick would only come!" she sighed; for Stefeli had noticed that when her father and mother sought his advice, every difficulty seemed to disappear. Now that things were so topsy-turvy, he could surely help.

Mr. Delrick was coming down the stairs from his room as Stefeli rushed out, and when she ran up to him and seized his hand, he asked

kindly, "Are you ready to start? Are you coming with me for a morning walk?"

Stefeli had hoped he would ask this very question and gladly went off with him. She quickly poured into his ear how Vinzi had cried till his eyes were red and swollen, how her father had not finished his coffee, but had pushed the cup aside and hurried off, and now her mother was sadder than she had ever seen her. "But you will make everything all right again," concluded Stefeli with great confidence.

"I will do whatever I can," he promised.

The child's words gave him food for thought. He wondered if the mother's fears had become a fact, and the thought caused him the greater anxiety because he planned to depart within a few days to meet a friend at the Italian lakes.

When the two returned to the house, matters did not appear to be much better. Vinzi had told his mother at last how his father's words had shattered all his hopes, and she had tried to console him by saying he might change his mind; Vinzi should try to do his father's pleasure and show an interest in the tasks he set him. Then his father would surely allow him to return to the mountain.

But Vinzi shook his head and said, "Father will never let me go again. He thinks I find pleasure up there in something he does not want me to do, and that is true. I understand now what he means, though I did not before."

His mother could say no more, for she believed Vinzi was right. What would happen next? Would he be sent away again? If so, where? Her husband had an older brother, and the two men had managed the farm at Freiburg which they had inherited from their father. When they had inherited the estate in Leuk from their cousin, Vinzenz had decided to live on it, for if it was to be brought into good condition again after having been sadly neglected he would have to look after it himself. Her husband's brother was as silent and unsociable as the old cousin who had lived in Leuk, and he looked as much the savage too. Vinzenz had left an old servant with him on the Freiburg farm who knew how to do everything just as Vinzenz wanted it. His brother was averse to undertaking anything new, and kept postponing all personal effort in the hope that his brother would soon return.

Mrs. Lesa knew that there had been eccentric

people in the Lesa family and suddenly a new fear arose in her heart. If the father decided to send Vinzi to the Freiburg estate in order to interest him in the work and management of a farm, there would be nothing but solitude for him there. Might not the boy, who had always been different from other children, grow still more peculiar if he lived with his eccentric uncle? It was said the old cousin at Leuk used to sit in front of his barn for hours at a time and stare fixedly into space, and the people had called him Starri of Leuk.* The Freiburg uncle was said to do the same thing and as such nicknames are passed along and everyone knew the Lesa family originally came from Leuk, he also was called Starri of Leuk.

When she reached this point in her thinking she was more anxious than ever. Her husband's grievance against his son was that he was always staring into the distance, never seeing or hearing what went on before his eyes. What if her lively young son should become the third Starri of Leuk?

She was roused from her dark forebodings by

*The Starer of Leuk.

Stefeli's sudden entrance. She had come to tell her mother that Mr. Delrick had returned from his morning walk and was now talking to Vinzi in his room. Mrs. Lesa hurried to prepare her lodger's breakfast, which was not ready for him because he had returned much earlier than usual.

Mr. Delrick was well aware of Vinzi's lifelong passion for music, and he also knew the father's will and wish, and that he had sent his son to the mountain in order to accomplish his purpose. But he had not learned from Stefeli's eager story what had roused the father's anger and caused the son's tears so soon after the joyful homecoming. He took such a lively interest in the joys and sorrows of the Lesa family that he felt he must learn if he could help now in any way. He was to be with them such a very short time that he had hurried back from his walk to talk to the brooding Vinzi. Sitting down beside him, he told him he would be traveling over the Simplon in two days, and if Vinzi had any messages for his friends, he would gladly carry them.

Vinzi's face brightened at this news, and he asked with intense longing, "Are you going to

see Father Silvanus and the grandfather?"

"I do not know who they are," answered Mr. Delrick. "Tell me about them, and about all your experiences up there."

Vinzi opened his heart. How he talked of all that occupied his thoughts! Mr. Delrick showed such quick sympathy that he could tell him all about the friends and the music that had made him so happy on the mountain. And now he would be glad to do whatever work was to be done, and would do it happily, even to giving up playing or even hearing any more music, if only he could hope to return to the mountain next summer and go to Father Silvanus every morning. But his father had said that could not be.

His account shed new light on the matter, and after a while Mr. Delrick said, "Tell me, Vinzi, did Father Silvanus ask you to try to carry on your music at home or did he only mean that he wished you to continue your lessons if you went back to him?"

Vinzi reported what the priest had advised and that he had said it would be impossible as he knew his father would not allow such a thing.

"You wish to learn to play an instrument for your own pleasure, Vinzi?" inquired Mr. Del-

rick. "Have you thought of making music your life work? Or could you not imagine such a thing?"

Vinzi's eyes flamed.

"Oh, yes, I could! I kept thinking about it while I was up on the mountain, more each day. I can very well imagine what that would be!" Vinzi assured him. "I would like not only to play an instrument but want to know all about music, like Father Silvanus. He knows everything and can explain how the notes are put together so they make harmony, and how to write them down so that one can read them from the page. He started to teach me all that, and it is so lovely and so wonderful! Oh, I would gladly shovel snow all day and do all kinds of hard labor in order to stay up there the whole winter if I might be with Father Silvanus, for he would continue teaching me. He said so." Vinzi found it difficult to suppress his rising grief.

"You see, Vinzi, your father has only your welfare at heart," explained Mr. Delrick kindly. "You know that yourself, and I can assure you it is so. He made this decision because he thinks your life up on the mountain would stand

in the way of your happiness. But time brings many changes, and he may not hold to this idea. It is altogether wrong for you to keep repeating those words; they only make you sad. Did you not find good fortune and happiness where you expected only sorrow and pain? Remember that, Vinzi; it will give you courage."

While they had been talking Mrs. Lesa had gone in and out of the room, setting the breakfast table, and it did much for her peace of mind to see the two talking and to know the boy was paying close attention to Mr. Delrick's words.

"Now, Vinzi, pull yourself together and be happy that you are home again," advised Mr. Delrick, getting up from his chair. "Show your father a happy face when he comes home and be willing to do the work he wishes you to do. Then everything will come out right. Will you think over what I have said?"

Vinzi readily promised and when Mr. Delrick left the room looked up at his mother with brighter eyes.

The day passed quietly, for all felt depressed and the merry mood of the evening before had vanished. When evening came and Vinzenz sat out on his bench as usual, his forehead was

drawn into deep wrinkles and he let his pipe go out as he stared at the ground. Mr. Delrick now stepped up to him and as he struck a match and offered it to his host, he remarked, "You are not in a good humor, Mr. Lesa, or you would not let your pipe go out. Here, light it again."

"Humor, humor indeed!" repeated Mr. Lesa savagely. "When a field is destroyed by hail, one may hope the next year will bring a crop. But when one's only son goes from bad to worse, where is there any hope?"

"So far as I can judge, you have a well trained and honest son, Mr. Lesa," said Mr. Delrick calmly.

"There is nothing to complain about in that respect," replied the father. "But what's to be

done when a father tries to see that all his son has to do is to enjoy his good fortune, and the boy does not see it or know what is best for him, and doesn't wish to learn anything but childish stuff? But I will not give up until Vinzi returns to his senses, even if I have to send him across the ocean. However, there is a place nearer where his childishness will find no support, that's a sure thing."

"You mean your son's love of music and his wish to devote himself to it? That may be something quite different from childishness; it may be something very serious on his part."

"Something very serious!" repeated the roused father. "It is play, just like anything else. I would have nothing against it if the boy amused himself singing merry songs in the leisure of the evening, but that's not his way. He sits and gazes ahead without seeing or hearing anything; he thinks only about his piping. Once I found a whole pile of pipes he had carved, stowed away in the haymow—children's toys on which he put all his thought!"

"But that shows how earnest he is in his longing for music," replied Mr. Delrick. "If it were only play like any other game, he would have

dropped it for something else long since, after the way of boys. His mind would not cling so to one thing. And his perseverance in trying to make each instrument better so it would meet his requirements shows how great his zeal is. I am convinced this is no play with him but has become his serious work."

"Work! Do you call such a thing work?" and in his anger Vinzenz Lesa puffed unusually thick clouds out of his pipe.

"Certainly music can be work, and where there is genius, it can become a high calling," continued Mr. Delrick. "I think, Mr. Lesa, you should let your son learn an instrument. His desire for it is so intense he would undertake any kind of work with pleasure in order to fulfil his wish."

Vinzenz Lesa laid his pipe aside, and that with him was a sign of greatest agitation.

"Sir," he said, restraining his anger with difficulty, "the only son of Vinzenz Lesa shall not be a musician. He has a farm on which he can live like a gentleman. If he wants to blow a trumpet later on as much as he wants to now, he can afford to do so. But it is quite a different matter to lead a boy away from a profitable and

proper calling and train him to play instruments and write music. Vinzi has no common sense, for he tells me what you have just said: that he wants to take up music as his occupation. No, sir, the son of Vinzenz Lesa shall never become a wandering minstrel!"

"It is not necessary for a musician to be a wanderer," Mr. Delrick declared. "There are many musicians, gifted men, who practise their calling in quite a different manner."

"They come to one's door," continued the enraged father, "many hundreds of them. The man with a broken fiddle, the woman with a screeching voice, both clothed in rags. That's the end of them all! Sir, if you had an only son, would you make a musician of him?"

"Surely not one like you describe," answered Mr. Delrick, "but if I had a son with the talent which makes a great composer, I know nothing would hinder me from helping him fulfil his desire."

"My lad does not have such a gift, that is sure," declared the father obstinately. "Such genius is not often found. Believe me, sir, when Vinzi comes to his senses he will be glad enough that he lives on a fine farm and is its

owner instead of being a wandering musician."

Mr. Delrick confessed he did not know how much talent for music Vinzi possessed; he only knew of the boy's intense delight in it. He also felt that Vinzenz Lesa's opinion about a musician's life was not to be changed with words. One question had arisen, however. How could he decide whether he would be justified in trying to overcome the father's aversion or whether he ought to give him his support and aid in bringing his son into the right path?

"Mr. Lesa," he said as he rose and held out his hand, "we will talk no more about it now, for it seems we can't come to any understanding today. But we will discuss it again, when I hope we will agree, for we have always gotten along well with one another until now."

"We have that," replied Vinzenz Lesa, shaking the outstretched hand. "And when we do not hold the same opinion, still I know that you mean well."

On the following day, the last before Mr. Delrick departed, it was so silent and sad in the house that one might have supposed a great misfortune was impending.

Stefeli had thought that when Vinzi was

once more at home there would be nothing but happiness in the house. Now it was just the opposite and the only one who could help them was leaving.

Mr. Delrick had told Mrs. Lesa of his conversation with her husband, but declared in spite of it he still hoped to find a way out for Vinzi. However, she could entertain no such view and saw only disaster ahead. Even if her husband yielded to Mr. Delrick's persuasion, he would never be reconciled and there would always be dissension between father and son. Only one person could avoid this and he was going away.

Vinzi thought that if he only could talk everything over again with Mr. Delrick, joy and confidence would be restored, but this was impossible since he was departing.

Mr. Lesa was under the impression that his wife and son did not understand what was necessary for the boy's welfare. The only one who would be likely to have such insight and bring the others to his viewpoint was now leaving them.

Mr. Delrick still had a kind word for one and all, but he could not lift them out of their depression.

As he withdrew to his own room on the last evening, there came a knock at his door and Vinzi stepped in. He was carrying two books and a little package, and asked timidly if Mr. Delrick would take them to his cousins. The little packet was for Russli; he had promised faithfully he would send it to him. The books were for Jos and Faz, for the boys had told him how glad they were to read on the long winter evenings, and as they had only a few books, they had to read them over and over again. Vinzi wanted him to carry his best wishes to all the cousins, and to the grandfather and Father Silvanus. Would he thank them for all they had done and say how much he would like to be with them, how glad he—but Vinzi could get no further. He said a hurried good-night and went off.

Mr. Delrick intended to return to Germany from the Italian lakes by another route. He hoped to return the next summer, which news was received by the Lesa family with much rejoicing, though Stefeli thought it was a very long time to wait. Early the next morning Mr. Delrick was on his way up to the Simplon.

CHAPTER IX

SURPRISES, NOT FOR RUSSLI ALONE

SEPTEMBER and October were months of heavy work for Vinzenz Lesa, and he was busy from dawn to dark. Usually he was in a happy mood at this season because of the blessings of a bounteous harvest. However, this autumn he went around in silence and often stood lost in thought, gazing into space. It was evident he was pondering some difficulty. Indeed, the problem of Vinzi's future filled his mind night and day and left him no peace, for he loved his son and was as proud of him as only a father can be. But the boy must be brought to his senses and realize his good fortune.

After many days spent in weighing the matter, he came to a definite decision, and went into the room where his wife sat mending his shirt. She was just as much disturbed as he, and for the same reason.

"I'll take the boy away on Sunday," said he directly he came in. "I'll take him to my brother in Freiburg. There will be plenty of

work until winter, and Vinzi will be glad of it for he will find no amusements there."

Mrs. Lesa's sewing slipped out of her fingers into her lap as she looked up at her husband pale with dread.

"Have you considered the state your brother is in, Vinzenz? Do you not remember the name they have given him?" she asked. She was filled with anxiety for she could picture their Vinzi staring ahead as was his habit and her brother-in-law, sad figure that he was, alongside him.

"That's nothing," replied her husband. "He is not vicious; he just doesn't take to work and can't manage things; but he has sense enough to know there should be a master on the place as well as a servant. That is why he insists I ought to go back or send my boy to him. Vinzi is not stupid, and when he finds he can issue orders he will like it. After that comes knowledge. This is just the thing for him, believe me! I have thought it all over, and we are off on Sunday."

Plenty of objections occurred to Mrs. Lesa, but since it seemed everything she had said only strengthened her husband's determination, she

remained silent and he went off. When she was alone with her thoughts, she remembered what grief she had suffered when Vinzi went away before, and how much better things had gone with him than she had feared. She had not trusted in the dear God. He had led her lad to kindly people, and surely to begin grieving and doubting now, as though she knew better than He what was best for Vinzi, displayed ingratitude. She would put everything in His hands, in full confidence that the Father in Heaven meant well with all His children and would guide hers as was best. She grew calm, and longed to talk with Vinzi, who did not know anything about this new plan.

That evening she heard Vinzi and his father as they returned from the woods where they had been all day and called the boy to her, for she knew that her husband would be busy in the stable and barn and would not miss him.

Stefeli came running in as soon as she heard Vinzi, but her mother sent her out to the barn on an errand, expecting she would remain there quite a while with her animal friends.

But Stefeli had noticed that her mother had something special on her mind, and thought it

was absolutely necessary she should be present. She flew on her errand and was back again. But her mother did not share her view, and said, "Go and search every corner in the hen-house. You know the hens lay in unexpected places. Hunt everywhere before you bring in the eggs."

Stefeli ran as fast as she could, but she was hardly out of the house before she came rushing back. Flinging open the door, she shouted, "He is coming back! He is coming back!"

With that she was off again. The mother and Vinzi gazed at one another. Both had the same thought, but it seemed so impossible that neither expressed it.

The door opened again and what they thought impossible was really a fact. Stefeli stepped in triumphantly, holding Mr. Delrick by the hand. The surprise was so great that neither Mrs. Lesa nor Vinzi could utter a word though both their faces beamed with joy.

"I have changed my plans," explained Mr. Delrick after first greetings. "My friends are returning to Germany another way, so I have come back. Really I could not do otherwise for I carry such heaps of greeting for Vinzi from the people on the mountain that I had to unload

them. They treated me as an old friend because I brought Vinzi's messages."

Vinzi's eyes sparkled as he asked in eager anticipation, "Did you see them all? Grandfather and Father Silvanus too?"

"Everybody! And they all seem to love you, Vinzi," replied Mr. Delrick. "Your good Cousin Lorenz and his wife could not talk enough about the happy times you had together." Then he launched into an account of the happiness the gifts had given the three boys Out of sheer ecstasy Russli would not let his present leave his hands. Wherever he went he carried the red silk bag filled with the glittering agate marbles. Mr. Delrick said he brought a special message from Russli, and though he did not quite understand it, Vinzi would likely do so. Russli wished to say he would never tickle them again and had not expected his surprise to be so lovely.

Mr. Lesa now stepped into the room, and in his surprise at seeing Mr. Delrick, he stood stock still. Then shaking the proffered hand with all his might, his eyes shining with pleasure, he said, "So it is actually true? I could not help thinking it would be this way, life has been so empty since you left. Welcome back again!" he said, emphasizing his words with another handshake. "And now let's sit down to supper. My wife is sure to have something special for this guest. She is certainly just as glad as I am that you are back."

Mrs. Lesa had already disappeared to prepare the supper, and the meal was eaten with high satisfaction for the pleasure of the reunion had banished all sad thoughts.

When they rose from the table, Mr. Delrick said, "May I have a little talk with you out on the bench, Mr. Lesa, after our old manner? Don't forget your pipe."

Mrs. Lesa understood that Mr. Delrick wished to have a private conversation with her husband, so she kept the children indoors with her.

Mr. Delrick lost no time in beginning, and as soon as the two men had sat down, he said, "You may well suppose, Mr. Lesa, that I had a reason for altering my plans and returning here."

"You surely would not do so otherwise," was the prudent reply.

"I have some news I think is so important that I wished to lose no time in giving it," continued Mr. Delrick. "I spent a day up on the mountain in order to deliver Vinzi's messages in person and to look up his friends there. First I called on your cousin, the worthy Lorenz Lesa, and his wife. These good people could not tell me enough about Vinzi, how beautiful he had made the summer with his music and songs, and how

hard it is for both old and young to get along without him. That ought to please a father, hadn't it?"

The latter nodded assent.

"Then I visited the grandfather in the Tower. His joy was really touching when I gave him Vinzi's greetings. He said Vinzi had given him the most delightful hours he had had for many years with his playing and singing, and that it was his dearest wish to have the youngster sing as he departed on his last journey. His music must have been remarkable, not just frivolous wandering minstrel music, to have made such an impression on the aged man. What do you think?"

Vinzenz Lesa again nodded silently.

"When I asked him whether Father Silvanus knew much about music, my question roused the old man and he told me that Father Silvanus is really a great musician. He studied many years in a college at Rome. However, he sought solitude, and came up on the mountain to find it, and has lived there a number of years, doing much good. That convinced me I had discovered just the man I was searching for, one who could judge intelligently Vinzi's talent. So I went to

Father Silvanus. As soon as he heard I came from Vinzi, he took a great interest in me. He asked if the boy was taking lessons and if his talent was being developed. I confessed it was on that account I had come to him, to hear what he thought about his talent. The good Father showed real enthusiasm, and exclaimed, 'The boy is full of music! I never tried to teach him anything, only to entice it out of him.' He said he wanted to call my attention to two things; then I could judge for myself. The first melody that Vinzi composed, or at least the first that he had composed and played, had been so original and so beautiful that he himself often played it for his own pleasure. Next, Vinzi had set a tune to some words, and it had won all hearts. It was being sung by all the herd boys on the pastures, by the girls at their spinning-wheels, by the boys in stable and barn. 'It is whistled and hummed by the people on the roads, who call it *Our Song*. No one knows whence it came, but it is the beloved property of the entire mountain. Isn't that sufficient?' asked the Father. I do not doubt any longer, Mr. Lesa, that the boy has genius. Even you must be convinced it is worth while to open the way so his gift can be

developed, and of course you will do so."

For a while Mr. Lesa blew out clouds of smoke in silence, then said cautiously: "And what then? To develop it means the boy will want to do nothing else than make music. However, Vinzenz Lesa does not wish to make a musician of his only son. Musicians are vagrants; they have no real homes. If Vinzi once starts the roaming life he will be ruined. And I, who know this, am I to start him on it? No, sir, you cannot ask it!"

Only after considerable reflection did Mr. Delrick speak, for he had not expected such a reply. Then he said with rising emotion, "It seems you cling to the idea that Vinzi can be nothing more than a wandering musician. But let me make a proposition. You surely have faith in me, Mr. Lesa?"

"I certainly have," rejoined the latter.

"Good! Then I propose that you let me have your boy for a year or a little longer. I'll do with him just what I would with my own son. When he comes back, if you think just the same as today, a year abroad will not have done Vinzi any harm. If he is to spend his life as a farmer, it cannot be very bad to have learned something.

That does everybody good, whatever his occupation."

Mr. Lesa seemed to be weighing the matter, but suddenly and firmly said, "That cannot be, sir," and when asked his reason continued, "I do not care to send my son to your house for a whole year as a visitor when you have paid more than what was necessary for just a few weeks in mine."

Mr. Delrick smiled as he explained, "I live all alone in my big old house, which is quiet and often empty, so you can understand your son would be a blessing and put life into the old house. However, if this does not satisfy you, I will promise to come back to your house as your guest so often that it will balance any difference. Now shake hands on this, Mr. Lesa; I hope you will never regret it."

Though many objections crowded into Mr. Lesa's mind, he could not conquer the thought that a year abroad could really do no harm to a boy like Vinzi; he had seen so little of other people. Seeing how many boys of his age had to struggle for a living might teach him to be grateful for his pleasant home. Taking him from his free life in the country to the paved

streets of the city might make him homesick and he would be glad to return even before the year was out.

"I'll shake hands on that!" and Vinzenz Lesa pressed the offered hand to seal the compact. "I will only add, sir, that should Vinzi want to come home sooner than the time set, you are to let him do so."

Mr. Delrick gave the promise unconditionally, and then rose to take the news to Mrs. Lesa, while the farmer went about his evening tasks in barn and stable. She could scarce find words to express her joy and gratitude over the turn of events. How wonderful it was for Vinzi to escape living with his morose uncle! And although she did not know just what Mr. Delrick had in view for Vinzi, she was overjoyed at the prospect of her son spending a whole year with such a man.

Vinzi knew no more about the plans than his mother, but Mr. Delrick had told him he would follow the wishes of Father Silvanus so he was sure all would be well with him.

Three days later was a time of farewell, but now no one was sad. Stefeli alone was upset, for she thought no one in the world had so lone-

some a life as she. As a matter of fact, she was much alone during the winter that followed, for she had no companion on her way to and from school, and sociable Stefeli sighed many times because of this misfortune.

Now and again a letter came from Mr. Delrick bringing news of Vinzi. Each one had to be read aloud by the mother. The reports were always very favorable: the boy was in good health and busy with his work; he sent hearty greetings to all of them, and Mr. Delrick added a few friendly words, reiterating what a pleasure it was to have the boy with him and to watch his gratifying development.

The father always listened breathlessly to these reports about his son, but they often seemed to disappoint him in some way, and he would ask, "Is there no more?" as if he hoped the letter would contain some other message. When his wife assured him she had read it all, he would walk silently away. She well knew he was expecting something that did not come, and she guessed that he would have been better pleased if Vinzi were not doing so well, if he wanted to come home.

She began to worry once more. How would

things go when he did return? Would he do as his father wished? If so he would never be really happy. And if his father allowed him to do the thing he loved most, that would make dissension between the two, for the father would never become reconciled to the thought that his son would be a wandering musician. She remembered how intensely happy her husband had been when a son was born, how he had worked untiringly, how nothing had been too good for him. When he looked on the baby, he would say, "He shall have everything he wants." Such sympathy for her husband filled her heart that she felt she must call the boy home at once, but the next moment she said to herself: "Oh, but if I do, poor Vinzi will never be happy!"

In her anxiety she was glad to remember she had nothing to decide in the matter, and consoled herself with the fact that, after all, the One who decides all things saw further than any of them and He alone knew what was best for one and all.

CHAPTER X

OLD FRIENDS AND NEW LIFE

It was spring again, and the trees and hedges were in bloom. The grass was so fresh and so green that Stefeli feasted her eyes on it as she walked through the meadows with her schoolbag on her back.

Stefeli was coming home on the last day of school. No more study until winter. How lovely that day had been the year before when she had walked home with Vinzi, talking over the days ahead. Then there lay before them the whole beautiful summer with its long days on the sunny pasture. But what would happen this summer? Stefeli foresaw many long hot days in the house with the tiresome knitting, and not a single day on the pasture. When she thought about it she sat down in the meadow and sobbed aloud.

But Stefeli never cried very long, and when she remembered that two days before she had seen half-ripe strawberries behind the barn, she

jumped up quickly; she would toss her schoolbag in the hall and then gather the berries. But when she flung open the door, she stood riveted to the spot in surprise. Her mother sat talking quite confidentially with a stranger, and beside him sat a boy the size of Vinzi, who was taking a lively part in the conversation.

"Of course that is the little daughter," the man said, glancing toward the door. "Come here, Stefeli; we are not strangers. I am Cousin Lorenz and this is Jos, Vinzi's good friend."

The delighted Stefeli went forward to greet them both; anyone whom Vinzi loved was particularly welcome when she was feeling so forlorn. She shook hands with Cousin Lorenz for he looked at her with such kindly eyes, and then stepped up to Jos, who smiled at her as though to say, "We'll get along nicely together."

Stefeli turned to face her Cousin Lorenz and asked, "Jos is going to stay with us the whole summer; isn't that so? Just as long as Vinzi stayed with you."

Her cousin laughed heartily, and said, "That is surely a fine welcome! We will see what your father thinks. I wish you would take Jos outdoors for a while."

Stefeli did not wait for him to ask twice, but took Jos by the hand and drew him happily along. He must see everything in stable and barn, in garden and hen-house.

While they were gone, Vinzenz Lesa came in from his work and greeted his guest with evident pleasure; it was good to see his happy, contented cousin just when he was so depressed.

After the first greetings, Lorenz said, "We were worried because we did not hear anything more from you, and my wife gave me no rest.

She feared we might not see your Vinzi until late in the summer, and we want him with us all summer. It occurred to me that I would bring our Jos to you for a while, as we had arranged, and then later the two boys could come to us until winter. But your wife now tells me Vinzi is away, that I cannot even see him, and as to his coming up to us, that is out of the question. My wife will be bitterly disappointed; you cannot conceive how she loves the boy, but he deserves it."

Hospitable Stefeli soon thought Jos ought certainly to have something to eat, and came leading him into the room like an old friend.

As Jos went up to greet him, Vinzenz Lesa looked into the lad's open countenance with both pain and pleasure.

"He will be as big as you are, Lorenz," he declared after looking Jos over critically again. "He must be a great help to you already."

Mrs. Lesa had withdrawn some time before, and now came to the door to signal to Stefeli, who immediately began to lay the table.

"Your wife has a good helper, too," said Cousin Lorenz, who approved the way the little girl went about her work.

The mother now came in to spread her table with the best larder and cellar provided, for to feast those who had shown such kindness to her Vinzi was a keen delight.

"You must stay with us a few days, cousin," said she as she sat opposite him at table and saw to it that their plates were replenished with second servings of the ham which looked tempting indeed against the green leaves of the tender lettuce her garden had supplied. "You must leave Jos with us for several weeks at least."

"You make it easy for one to wish to stay, cousin," said Lorenz. "I chose to come on Saturday in order to spend Sunday with you, so I will gladly remain if you say so, but I must return home on Monday. As to the boy, Cousin Vinzenz shall settle that; I leave it to him."

"There's plenty of time for that," said the latter deliberately. "We will take a walk through the fields tomorrow morning. You would like to look over the farm, wouldn't you? We can talk over things then."

"Look at the cow stable, father, above everything else," cried Jos with enthusiasm, who had remained silent out of respect for his Cousin

Vinzenz. But the impression he had received in the stable was so powerful he must speak now. "There certainly are no finer cows than those in his stable, and they are as clean as though they had just been washed."

"I thought the cattle would please you," remarked his father.

Early the next afternoon the two men wandered off through the verdant fields that belonged to the Lesa farm, and Mrs. Lesa took the children up the sunny slope where the first strawberries were ripening. She knew that walk would please them, and besides, the men wished to be alone to talk. Looking at the blossoming trees, the lush grass, the fields promising bountiful harvests, Vinzenz and Lorenz reached the high ground where the woods began. Before they stepped into the woodland path, Lorenz paused to gaze down on the dwelling that looked so inviting among the tall walnut trees.

"Vinzenz, you are a lucky man!" he exclaimed. "Peace and happiness at home, and surrounded by acres that could not be more beautiful, all of them your own."

"Yes, and over in Freiburg another place with

twice as many cattle as here, and a grass crop to fill the haymow to the roof," but the furrows on Vinzenz's forehead grew deeper and deeper as though each thing he mentioned was worse than the last. "Twelve cheeses a year are made from that milk."

"Vinzenz, you have no reason to be downhearted," said his cousin with laughter in his eyes. "I never knew the paternal estate belonged to you. Two such farms for your own! Certainly God has showered you with blessings! Yet you look as though you had nothing but bad weather for your share."

"It's easy for you to talk," said Vinzenz savagely. "You have three strong sons who are happy in their work. Joy and success are ahead of you. But after all my effort I must look on while a beautiful estate goes to ruin. I cannot be in two places at one time, and my only son won't open his eyes to see the fine career awaiting him. Hundreds would envy him. When I inherited this farm I left my father's homestead, where every tree was a comrade and every head of cattle had grown up under my eyes. I was not happy to leave it, but everything here had gone to ruin. No stranger would have under-

taken to restore it, but I said to myself, 'You will do it for the sake of your son. In a few years he will be old enough to manage it and you can go home again.' Well, the farm has been put into shape quicker than I expected. You yourself say it looks like a blossoming garden from one end to the other. Must I see it go to ruin, or shall I let my homestead run down? Now tell me, what do you think? Do you think singing and piping can take the place of caring for an estate? You see how everything stands with me!"

"Matters are not half as bad as you think," rejoined Lorenz cheerfully. "You have a boy who will amount to something some day, rest assured of that, cousin. And you have a girl besides, of whom any father could be proud. Let six or seven years pass. You are such a robust man you can keep the two farms in condition until then, with some help. By that time you can settle your daughter here; she will know how to manage it, and you can return to your homestead. I wouldn't wonder if someone would pop up who would be willing to share the work and the management with your daughter. Then your farm will have the right care."

Lorenz had started to walk on, but now he suddenly paused to say, "But I have forgotten to ask the principal question. Do you want to keep Jos or shall I take him home? He is fairly quick to learn."

"I can see that," remarked Vinzenz. "You will miss him, and I am already in your debt for Vinzi was of no assistance to you in any way."

But Lorenz remonstrated. Vinzenz ought to hear what his wife would have to say about that; she would tell him quite a different story, and with reason. It was she who had urged him to bring Jos to them. She had never allowed any of her boys to stay away even over night, but she was sure Jos could learn only good things with the parents of such a boy as Vinzi.

"Now tell me frankly," concluded Lorenz, "is there any other reason you hesitate to keep Jos?"

"That is my only reason," was the decided answer.

"Then he will stay with you and you can send him home whenever it suits you best."

Lorenz now quickened his pace for he wished to have time to have a pleasant chat with Stefeli and her mother, with both of whom he had established a close friendship.

When he bade Stefeli farewell, as he was leaving before she would be up in the morning, he gave her his hand, but she refused to say good-bye, and in the morning she was standing at the door long before sunrise to meet him as he came downstairs. She had grown so fond of him it was no task to get up early to see him off. Then, too, she had something on her mind and when he came down stairs, she asked eagerly, "Can Jos stay? Can he stay all summer?"

"Yes, yes," answered Lorenz with a smile. "Until your father sends him home."

Mrs. Lesa had made a pot of fragrant coffee and cooked a hearty breakfast to fortify him on his homeward journey, and now Vinzenz came in with Jos. The boy had been up before Stefeli and when he had found the stable open had gone in to inspect the cows, first one, then another. His exclamations of admiration greatly pleased Vinzenz, who looked on as he went from stall to stall.

After many hearty handshakes, Lorenz started on his way. Vinzenz wished to accompany him to the border of his estate, and the others went as far as the corner of the garden.

When the men were out of sight, Stefeli asked

quickly, "Will you go to the pasture, so that I can go too?"

"Yes, I will. But it does not matter what I wish to do," answered Jos, "for I am not master here."

"Oh, if only I could be master!" sighed Stefeli.

Her father soon returned and as her mother was working among her vegetables, he met all three in the garden. He approached Jos, behind whom Stefeli stood for she was eager to see and to hear what would happen.

"It seems to me you find real pleasure in the cows. Will you take over their pasturing, Jos?" he asked. "On the pasture you shall be your own master. I will give you entire charge of them, for you know what is necessary. The child will go with you. She knows the work pretty well and is acquainted with all the roads and paths. How does that suit you?"

"Oh, there is nothing I would love better than that!" exclaimed Jos while Stefeli leaped with joy and dashed off to make hurried preparations for the day.

Stefeli had never imagined matters could come around so happily. How fine to be outdoors again, to follow her good friends the cows

out to the pasture and to sit once more in the shade of the ash tree! But even if she had not been filled with happiness on her own account, Stefeli would have been glad because Jos was so delighted with everything he saw. All her old friends were there, and four splendid red-and-white cows had been added to the herd; her father had brought them from Freiburg himself. A new Schwarzeli was also there, and even if it was not the same one as last year, it galloped from one end of the pasture to the other with the same friskiness, and over bridges and fences too, if they did not catch her in time. Jos must learn to know them all as well as she did, so she enumerated the characteristics of each; and they would learn about the four new cows together.

Jos showed the greatest zeal to learn everything and remembered it all after one telling. Stefeli was amazed at the way he anticipated what a cow would do. He would go over to an animal before it started off on a run and would stroke and pacify it. He would catch Schwarzeli by the tail just as she was going to make a first bound to rush down the pasture like the wind. It was as though he could always tell

just when they had it in mind to tear off. So it was not necessary to do much running after them and Jos kept saying, "Sit down under the tree, Stefeli; I can easily manage them."

And that was the truth. He learned the ways of them all so quickly, even of the newcomers, that they opened their great eyes in astonishment when their attempts to gallop off were frustrated. But with all his sharp watching, Jos found time to leap for sheer joy and to yodel so that the song reëchoed from the hills. His voice was so strong and melodious that Stefeli was charmed with it and kept pleading, "Sing again, Jos; sing once more!"

The mornings always passed so quickly that the two looked at one another in doubt when they heard the bell sound from the distance. Could it be midday? Then Stefeli spread out their lunch in the good old way under the ash tree and after a searching look at the herd which had settled down peacefully to rest in the sunshine, Jos seated himself by Stefeli, quite willing to eat.

"I am sure no one can arrange a table out in the pasture like you do, Stefeli," said he with admiration, and ate with keen relish.

The afternoons passed as rapidly as the morn-

ings and as they strolled homeward in the bright evening, Stefeli said, "It was so lovely today! I wish every day could be just like it."

"I too," agreed Jos.

Vinzenz Lesa stood at the corner of his barn watching as the herd approached. First Jos ran along one side, then along the other, to keep the cows in file instead of letting them scatter here and there.

"A smart, orderly boy," he thought as he went forward to take charge of the homecomers.

Now came a series of days which passed so happily that Stefeli's wish seemed to be fulfilled.

"It's just as if Vinzi were here again, isn't it, mother, since Jos came?" asked Stefeli one evening as she came in flushed with joy while Jos as usual stayed out with Vinzenz.

"Yes," replied the mother. "As long as we cannot have Vinzi with us, I am glad that Jos takes his place. I love him as much as if he belonged to us."

Jos was always the first one up in the morning, and if the stable was locked, he would find something to do in the barn, and Vinzenz always found him busy about some sensible task.

Stefeli grew impatient mornings when the two did not come into the house until the very last moment when the coffee was already on the table, and on their return Jos could not be induced to leave his cows until the last one had been watered and was comfortably bedded on the straw.

Everything that grew, that was planted and harvested was a pleasure to Jos, and he wanted to help with it.

At first Vinzenz Lesa had said to his wife bitterly, "Look at him! He enjoys everything and goes to his work with a zeal as if the farm were his own. Just see his pleasure in the life! And the other boy, for whom all the work is done, has no eyes to see it!"

And then matters came about so that Mrs. Lesa could find happiness in it all, for her husband talked to her about Jos every day, though in a different way. He could now say quite cheerfully, "That lad has four eyes in his head. He sees everything, even the things he might easily overlook and that would never be noticed by the farmhand. I can depend on him as on no one else."

Mrs. Lesa watched her husband's increasing

pleasure in the boy with gratitude, for he was in much better humor than for a long time. During the quiet afternoons which were hers since Stefeli was on the pasture again, she sat in her room and let her thoughts stray in the same direction day after day. She pondered about her Vinzi. Would he return at the end of the year to take up the life his father wished, and so perhaps be unhappy? Or had he chosen a new path which would forever estrange him from his father? She would hold imaginary conversations with him, and be startled by the slightest noise, thinking her boy might have returned suddenly.

She was thus occupied one afternoon when the front door opened and she heard the trample of feet in the hall. She hurried to the door and when she opened it, a strong, manly voice said, "Old acquaintances, Mrs. Lesa, seeking shelter in your house."

At the same moment one little hand grasped hers, and then another. By that time she saw who it was and exclaimed with heartfelt pleasure, "Welcome, Alida and Hugo! Welcome, Mr. Thornau! So you are back in our part of the country again?"

"Not exactly," said Mr. Thornau, returning her vigorous handshake, "unless you take us in. If you say no, we must wander again. I have to tell you first of all that I am bringing you two children who no longer have a mother. Both of them wanted to come here and nowhere else."

Mrs. Lesa was won over already. "Poor children!" said she to herself, and as she turned to him she added, "and poor father!" Then aloud, "Mr. Thornau, will you stay till evening? My husband will be home then, and you can talk it over with him."

"And what does his wife say?" he asked.

"She would be glad to take the place of mother for a time, if she could."

"Then all is well!"

Vinzenz Lesa was surprised to find the three guests sitting under his walnut trees, but there was not much time for astonishment as Mr. Thornau stepped up to him and eloquently accounted for his visit. He said he was convinced Mr. Lesa would not close his door on him, still less on his children, both of whom desired to spend the whole summer at his house. He had come with the firm conviction he would not be turned away. Mr. Lesa must not propose

another place known to both of them, for the children would not go there, and he would not force them to do so. It was a case of the Lesa house or back home again, for it was impossible for him to remain with them just then and equally impossible to leave them alone anywhere else.

Vinzenz Lesa was not displeased to hear that it was his house or none. However, one could not tell what these children would bring into his house; one knew so little about them. But after a little deliberation he said, "Talk it over with my wife, sir; taking care of the children would be her affair."

"I will be glad to do so," replied Mr. Thornau and turned quickly to her to ask, "Then everything is settled, is it not? for you have already said yes in your heart," and he heartily shook hands with her, for this was the case as she had decided long ago to keep the children and bestow on them all her love and care.

Mr. Thornau now wished to depart, but Mrs. Lesa suggested that it would be well for him to tell her what he wished the children to do and what their amusements were to be. Her own children led a very simple life, she said. He

replied that he wished nothing better for his two than to be out on the pasture from morning to night; the rest he would leave to her. He regretted that Alida's study of music had been given up, for he had delighted in it. But now his chief desire was that they should grow strong and ruddy and return to him looking as rugged as Mrs. Lesa's children. Then he drew her aside and pointing to the sad, pale Hugo, added, "I give him into your special care. He was never very strong or merry, but since his mother has died, he has no life, no joy, no interest in anything, and the doctor ordered him away." Then with a hasty farewell till fall, when they would all meet again, he left them.

Just then Jos and Stefeli came up to the stable with the herd. They were chatting merrily until Jos went on and Stefeli came slowly to the house. She was in no hurry for her mother would be busy in the kitchen and Jos would not come in for another hour or so. But suddenly she sighted two figures there by the strawberry bed! With a shout of joy Stefeli dashed up to Alida and Hugo, and the girls greeted one another with exclamations of delight.

"But where is Vinzi?" asked Alida, and

Stefeli informed her how long he had been gone, and no one knew when he would return.

Alida looked her disappointment but Stefeli, always ready with some consolation, said, "I am sure he will come home while you are here. Then there is Jos—you are sure to like him. You are going to stay with us the whole summer?"

Alida nodded and replied, "And we are to be out on the pasture every day; that was papa's order. But it will be a little tedious without Vinzi."

Stefeli assured her it was never tedious on the pasture, and so it proved. Day after day the merry company marched out to the sunny pasture, and Mrs. Lesa saw that they enjoyed a nourishing midday meal under the shade of the ash tree. Alida was in ecstasy over this free life. What joy to march off in the early morning! What bliss to breathe the exhilarating air and to hear the birds warbling in the trees until it sounded like a great song of joy lifted to Heaven.

On the first morning, Stefeli awoke Alida early, as had been agreed, and both girls, fresh and full of enterprise, stood waiting by the barn

for Jos, who was loosening the cows from their chains. Hugo had come down from his room to go out to the pasture with them as his father had ordered, but looked so wan and pale that Mrs. Lesa led him back to his room, straightened the pillows on his bed and told him to rest a little longer; there was no hurry about going to the pasture; she would take him out later, to show him the way. He need not get up so early hereafter.

For the first time since he had lost his mother, Hugo felt a motherly hand was caring for him and a great love for Mrs. Lesa filled his heart from that day. In these first days the silent, grieving boy passed many hours with her and found much comfort in the sympathetic way she listened when he talked about his mother, which he always did when they were alone together. The good her warm interest did him was soon plain to be seen, and one day he came downstairs as early as on that first morning. He looked much stronger now and to Mrs. Lesa's joy begged to go right out to the pasture. Until then he had always preferred staying in the house until she had sent him off, and she always accompanied him part of the way.

Hugo found Jos alone, singing and yodeling as he strolled about with his herd. It was as though Hugo saw the fine animals for the first time and he began to ask all sorts of questions, for he observed them closely and found a great difference in their behavior as well as in their appearance. This discovery caused him considerable surprise for he had thought that cows were just cows, one the same as the other. Jos was in his element and launched into an eloquent description of the habits of his cattle. With the insight into the characteristics of each member of the herd that Jos gave him, Hugo wanted to hear more and more. And all he had to do was to ask for Jos knew all he wished to learn, and could describe everything so vividly that their enjoyment was mutual. Hugo soon learned what fodder produces the best milk, and how milk is handled to make the best butter and cheese. He was also told that the creameries preferred Vinzenz Lesa's milk because his cows were of the finest breed and kept so clean.

The two boys were engaged in lively conversation when Stefeli ran up and much to their surprise began to lay out the mid-day meal under the ash tree. Stefeli was well pleased that

neither of them had noticed how late it was, for she had tarried over-long with Alida. The four of them soon sat down to their lunch in a particularly merry mood, for they were happy because Hugo was so bright and gay.

"Let us be a family from now on," suggested Alida, "for then we will keep together like this all the time. Hugo is the landlord and I am his sister, the young spinster of the estate. Jos is our manager."

"Then Stefeli can be the mistress," Hugo added.

"What are you thinking of, Hugo?" demanded Jos. "Stefeli cooks for us and lays the table. She couldn't be the wife of the landlord: she must be the manager's wife."

"Jos is right," decided Alida.

"Then the landlord will have a motner, and that's much better than a wife," declared Hugo. "When Mrs. Lesa visits us some day, you will have to receive her as the landlord's mother and make a great banquet for her."

This idea was highly approved, and they immediately began to discuss how the festival should be celebrated. Alida invented the most astonishing plans, including the use of torches

and rockets, until Jos declared, "Our cows will jump over the fences in fright, and the people at the feast will have to run after them in their holiday clothes."

This idea brought bursts of laughter from all four, but they soon dropped the discussion and lay down to rest in the deep shade. Fanned by the leafy boughs overhead, they slept as well as if they had been lying on a prince's bed, and the fresh air and warm sunshine brought a ruddy glow to Hugo's pale cheeks.

That evening when the quartet wandered home, Hugo turned aside with Jos, and both boys disappeared in the stable.

"Now he's begun it too," mourned Stefeli. "I wonder what they have to do in there!"

"Just let him go," remarked Alida. "He's much happier when he's with Jos, like today; I've noticed that."

CHAPTER XI

ONCE AGAIN THE OLD SONG

AUTUMN came that year altogether too soon for the Lesa household. The children did not like to think their days on the pasture were coming to an end, that two of them would soon be living far away in a great city, another go up into the mountains, while Stefeli would stay behind, a sad and lonely little girl.

"No, I don't want to live alone," said Stefeli with determination when they were discussing the sad outlook on one of their last days together. "I shall write a letter and send it to Cousin Lorenz. He promised me something."

"Vinzi will come home," suggested Alida, "and then you will have good company."

That same day Vinzenz Lesa said to his wife: "I only hope Lorenz will not take his boy away from me. It has been such a bountiful year, there is much to do. I can't get along without the boy, for I cannot see everything that must be done. He has a good memory, and displays as much thought and care as three. He shows

as much interest and pleasure in the farm as though he owned it. Ah, if he were mine! I would give half my wealth for such a son!"

"Let us be happy that he is still with us," rejoined his wife. "Perhaps we can keep him for quite a while; good Cousin Lorenz has sent us no warning yet."

Mr. Delrick wrote regularly, and a letter had recently come containing the usual good news: Vinzi was well and everything was going along all right. Mr. Delrick seemed in no hurry to write about Vinzi's return, though the year of his absence was near its end.

A few days later as the children entered the room one evening a thick envelope lay on the table.

"That is a letter from father to Mr. Lesa!" exclaimed Alida as she glanced at the handwriting.

"Now it's all over!" said Hugo. "You'll find we have to go, Alida."

The children were all alarmed, but even though they talked about their departure none of them thought it was actually near at hand. Even Jos, to whom the news was told the moment he came in, made great eyes. He had not

quite conceived that their happiness must end, for he and Hugo had drawn close in a warm friendship.

When Mr. Lesa came in he took up the letter only to lay it aside for he read letters only when there was nothing else to do and now supper was ready. When Mrs. Lesa had brought the food to the table and had attended to everything she said she would like to open the letter; she knew the children were eager to know what their father had written, and they had recognized his handwriting. He consented, and she read the letter to herself, then said she would tell them all about it next day. There was all sorts of information in it but the main news was that Mr. Thornau would arrive in a few days to take his children home. Absolute silence followed this announcement. Then, one after the other, the children left the table and gathered under the great walnut tree in front of the house. With the old tree as their witness, they solemnly promised to do all within their power to spend the next summer together.

When they were all fast asleep in their beds and Vinzenz Lesa had lit his evening pipe, his wife sat down beside him, saying she wanted to

read the letter aloud. Mr. Thornau wrote from Dresden, where he had gone to visit Mr. Delrick who had asked him to accompany him on a trip to Switzerland. He thought information by word of mouth concerning Vinzi would be more than welcome to the parents, and he would bring it. However, his time in Leuk would be very short. He could not arrive before Sunday evening and must be on his way early Monday morning. Now it would be ever so much pleasanter if they could spend Sunday together in Freiburg. That was Mr. Lesa's old home and surely he would be glad to visit it. Wouldn't they bring his children to meet him there, and of course Stefeli would come too. They could reach Freiburg early Sunday afternoon and he and Mr. Delrick would meet them at the train, for they expected to arrive earlier.

Vinzenz Lesa pondered awhile in silence, then asked, "What does he say about our boy?"

Mrs. Lesa assured him he had written nothing but what she had read; but Mr. Delrick would give them a report in person.

"Do you know why he doesn't care to bring him along?" asked her husband further.

"We can't know that," she replied.

"But we can guess. I can tell you why. Mr. Delrick now sees he cannot make him a traveling musician. He is in no hurry to bring him home and tell me frankly he does not know what to do with him, because he had turned his thoughts further away from being a farmer. Mr. Delrick is a good man, but he miscalculated. Everybody likes to put off as long as possible owning to have made a mistake."

Vinzenz Lesa now blew such dense clouds of smoke that his wife knew it was wise to wait a bit. Then she said cautiously: "Let us wait until we hear what Mr. Delrick has to say. It will be a blessing to talk with him. What do you think of going to Freiburg?"

"It has not entered my head," he replied curtly. "You surely do not think I'd make a trip like that without any reason, like a fellow who does not know what to do with his time."

"No one who knows you could believe that," said his wife. "But Mr. Thornau would not have settled upon a Sunday without a purpose. He knows you would not come on a week day. It was nice of him to invite us; he could have asked anyone to bring the children. He says it would be a favor if we went with them, and I must say,

Vinzenz, I've grown to love them dearly, and they are sorry to leave us. They have told me so and have shown me their hearts. I would like to see them safely in their father's hands."

"You can go with them; why not?" he retorted in a perverse tone. "Go with them to Freiburg; you are sufficient escort for them."

"No, Vinzenz, I will not do that," was his wife's decided reply. "You can see by the letter that Mr. Thornau wants you to come. You know very well that I could not decide about the boy's future. We will go together or not at all."

The silence which followed was too prolonged for Mrs. Lesa's patience, and she began again: "When we are invited in such a friendly manner, I do not know why we should not make the trip to Freiburg. Don't you remember how delighted we were as children when father and mother drove us there on a Sunday and how we thought ourselves the luckiest of mortals as we sat in the high carriage between them, traveling off to meet all kinds of adventures? We should make the trip just for memory's sake. First of all we went into the church and heard the great organ. You must recollect how your mother delighted in this above everything else.

Wouldn't you take pleasure in going there again? Besides, it strikes me it would be a good plan for you to use this chance to visit the estate. You have been wanting to see how matters stood there for quite a while, and you are sure to find lots of things to attend to. Now that Jos is with us, you are better able to leave than later on. It is certainly time you looked into things there. If nothing special takes you, you will not go until something is wrong and then you will regret the delay."

Vinzenz Lesa began thinking the journey might have its good side. With much hesitation and some resentment, he said, "How did you work that all out? I don't see how we could be away so long. It would take three days."

"Not for all of us," replied Mrs. Lesa quickly, for she had thought it all out. "We can attend to everything here early Sunday morning and be in Freiburg that afternoon. I will start back that evening with the children so we can be home Monday morning."

"How many children are you expecting to bring back? The stranger children will have gone, and you have only your one left."

"Only our two, Jos and Stefeli; I'll bring home

no strangers," said his wife appeasingly.

"What? You want to take Jos too?" he said excitedly. "Then my going is out of the question. If Jos isn't home to keep things in order I'll not take a step away from here; you can reckon on that."

Mrs. Lesa patiently explained that for one day, and that Sunday, the farm-hand could attend to the stable work, and Jos would be back again Monday morning. Nothing would be neglected. "And then think, Vinzenz," she concluded, "Jos has done much for us, and we have never given him the slightest pleasure. He would certainly enjoy this trip. It is because of him that you have the time to go to your other farm and to put things in order there. You can afford to be away eight days for when Jos is with me, I can promise you everything will be done at home."

Vinzenz Lesa was a just man and always ready to do what justice called for. After weighing the pros and cons, he was glad of this opportunity to give Jos a well-earned holiday, and said decisively, "Well, we'll make the trip. Tell Jos at once; he will plan everything out that needs to be done while he is away."

"Tomorrow morning," promised Mrs. Lesa, rejoicing that she could give the good news to all the children, especially to Jos.

When she made the happy announcement the next morning, Alida and Stefeli jumped for joy, and Hugo said, "Then everything isn't quite over! It will be much easier to go away when everybody goes with us." Jos could hardly conceive that such pleasure was for him. He would see the city, and much beautiful country on the way. It would be his first journey, for he had never been away from his mountain home until the time he came to Leuk.

Sunday arrived, and the merry party journeyed off through the green country. The trip was much finer than they had imagined. Alida and Stefeli talked incessantly and when Hugo was not taking part in the conversation, he was pointing out the interesting things along the way which might otherwise have been unobserved. Jos, on the other hand, was so engrossed with all that was new to him that he gazed about in silence.

Thus the hours flew by and the children jumped up in astonishment when Mr. Lesa said, "Watch out now, we will soon be in Freiburg."

A few minutes later there was a call of "Freiburg!" and the train stopped. Mrs. Lesa peered out of the window, and yes, there stood the gentlemen waiting to receive them. She could not help giving a sigh for she had hoped till this moment that Mr. Delrick might bring Vinzi along. But he was not there.

Alida and Hugo rushed up to their father and Mr. Thornau took them both in his arms while he responded to their boisterous greetings with happy exclamations. Then he held his son off from him, the better to gaze at him.

"Is this really my son Hugo, the little fellow without life and strength? Nut-brown as a woodsman! Fat cheeks! Eyes like a deer's! Mrs. Lesa, what have you done with this lad? And is this gipsy girl my Alida? The red blood flushes her brown cheeks—what health! Mrs. Lesa, Mrs. Lesa, how did you bring all this about?"

"Oh, we know, we know mighty well," the children chorused, and began to relate how they had spent the summer days.

After Mr. Delrick had greeted Mr. Lesa, he shook the wife's hand and as though he read what was in her heart, he said, "Don't worry,

Mrs. Lesa, everything goes well with the boy. That he is not here is due to no bad reason, believe me. Ah, there is my little friend Stefeli, and another old acquaintance. It's fine to have Jos here, for by now he belongs to your household."

"As one of our own," said Mrs. Lesa, putting her hand on the boy's shoulder. "Thank God we have him!"

"I wish to lay a proposition before you, and want Mr. Lesa's approval above that of all others," began Mr. Delrick. "Our friend, Mr. Thornau, has invited us all to dinner, and as the hotel is close by the old St. Nikolas Church, we thought it would be pleasant to go there first."

Mrs. Lesa looked at her husband, hoping he would consent, for to go to church would suit her best of all.

Old memories crowded Vinzenz Lesa's mind as soon as he trod the streets of Freiburg. Like the child of his neighbor, he had known nothing grander than to drive into Freiburg on Sundays, and, holding his mother's hand, step into the church and listen to the wonderful organ.

"If I had anything to say about it, I would like to go to the church first. It is Sunday and

it is proper for us to go there," he said.

So the party wandered into the city, and to the great old church, where it was so silent, so solemn in the semi-darkness that the children stepped very lightly down the aisle and seated themselves beside the grown-ups without a word. Suddenly the organ began to play, and through the stillness there floated music of such power and beauty that it seemed as if the heavenly choir were singing to call all the world to praise and prayer.

Stefeli uttered a suppressed cry of joy, and pulled violently at her mother's sleeve. "Mother, it is Vinzi!" she exclaimed, greatly excited.

The mother had recognized her Vinzi at her first glance toward the organ and the sight of his curly black head had so surprised and agitated her that it took all her power to keep from sobbing aloud. Her husband must know too. She nudged him gently and whispered, "Vinzenz, it is Vinzi!"

He made no reply, nor did he look up, unwilling to show how the music had moved him.

And now the music suddenly changed. From low mourning it grew to loud lamentation, as if a great choir of despairing mortals gave voice

to their suffering and penitence. Bitter pain, then supplication and fervent, humble prayer for succor and mercy. Suddenly it was as though the heavens opened and angels on high sang of merciful love and everlasting joy. Then above the heavenly choir there arose a voice, clear and powerful, filling the great church with the words:

"Yes, the holy hymn of grace
Sounds through all eternity."

It was Jos. Hearing those well-known notes sounding afresh so powerfully and inspiringly had overcome him and he could but add his voice to the angelic choir. When the last note died away, perfect silence reigned in the church. Then the two gentlemen rose, and Vinzenz Lesa also got up, wiping his eyes.

"You surely don't believe that," he said in a hoarse voice, as his wife followed him, in answer to the words she had whispered to him some time before. "No one can tell me that was our Vinzi!"

Mr. Delrick was standing just behind him and said, clapping him on the shoulder, "We will not take anything on faith. Let us climb up to the

organ loft and see for ourselves who plays like this."

"He certainly has skill," said Mr. Thornau. "How did you like it, Alida?"

"Oh, it was wonderful! I wish it could have kept on," she said regretfully.

"Well, come along; we too wish to know who

was playing," and Mr. Thornau took his daughter by the hand and they all climbed up to the organ loft. Mr. Delrick had gone ahead, and before the others had reached the loft, the same melody was heard again. Vinzenz Lesa stepped in, then stood motionless. There sat his son at the organ; the curly black head was Vinzi's. And he was playing the organ; he it was who brought forth these soul-stirring notes. There was no help for it, he had to wipe his eyes time and again.

But now Vinzi had finished. His mother let go Stefeli's hand and the little girl rushed off to her brother and threw her arms around him. His mother came up and embraced him tenderly, and the father moved over close to Mr. Delrick.

"Mr. Lesa," said that gentleman, "your son has played the Song of Grace to you. Now you must be gracious and forgive him if he does not become a farmer."

Lesa grasped his son's hand. "More than that, Vinzi!" he said at last, for he had difficulty in controlling his emotion. "You are doing your parents honor, though not as I intended. I did not know such things were possible. I did not know! When I used to come to Freiburg as a

boy and heard this organ, I supposed those who played it were people set apart, not folks like us. You have to thank Mr. Delrick, Vinzi; we all are indebted to him. He found the path for you and opened it up."

"Not I, Mr. Lesa; not I," objected Mr. Delrick. "It was Father Silvanus who knew what was in Vinzi and what should be done with him; we must thank him. And you must also learn that our Vinzi will not be a breadless vagabond when he carries on his art. He has been offered a position in a Dresden church, where he will play every Sunday. That will surely please you? At the same time he can continue his studies, for the longer he does that, the better. Let him stay with me for several years; will that be satisfactory to you?"

"Anything you think proper," replied Mr. Lesa without hesitation, now fully convinced that Mr. Delrick had done all along just as he desired, and much pleased that he had kept silent until he could prove his case.

There was one surprise after another in store for Vinzi. There was Jos standing in front of him. How joyously he greeted his old friend.

"It was you, then, after all!" he exclaimed.

"I heard you singing down in the church and it almost upset me. I asked myself over and over again, 'Who but Jos knows our song and has a voice like that?' But yet you could not be here. And now you are after all!"

Then Alida stood before him and Hugo and Mr. Thornau. One lively greeting followed the other. Alida had so much to say about past events, present and future, that Mr. Thornau finally had to say it was time to go to dinner; that they could carry on their conversation there.

In spite of Vinzenz Lesa's reluctance he could not help himself, but had to go to the Zahringerhof Hotel to dinner, a place he had never before entered, and then the hour of departure came too soon for all of them.

"You can have no conception of my gratitude, Mr. Lesa," said Mr. Thornau when he said farewell. "My son, who has never shown the slightest inclination whatever to follow any calling, has just declared his decision to become a farmer. He has already selected the manager for his estate, and insists that your cows are the only stock he will buy; they are the finest to be found. The youngster knows the breed already.

Then my daughter who has been hostile to studying music for over a year and has not opened the piano in spite of my pleas, now tells me it is her highest ambition to resume her lessons as soon as she returns to Hamburg. Hearing her former pupil play so beautifully makes her desire to follow him. In all earnestness I say, Mr. Lesa, that my gratitude for all my children have shared in your house is greater than I can express. I would like to prove it to you. Will you make a trip to Hamburg some day?"

"No, I believe not," said the latter truthfully. "But it is a pleasure to us if your children have profited by being with us. We have been glad to have them and hope they will come again."

Deeply moved, Mr. Thornau pressed Mrs. Lesa's hand, for he realized she had been a mother to his children and he asked sincerely, "May the children come to you again?"

"I shall be unhappy if they do not come next summer," she replied, torn by both joy and pain, "and I shall look for their return each following summer."

When taking leave of Vinzenz Lesa, Mr. Delrick said they would soon meet again, as he was planning to spend Vinzi's vacation with him in

his father's house. But first they would go up the Simplon; Father Silvanus must know how his pupil had progressed. He would take Vinzi with him if Mr. Lesa did not object. Mr. Lesa replied that he could do just as he thought best. Vinzi, standing alongside, listened intently. What was it his father had just said? How could he say this when he had forbidden him to go up the mountain again?"

"Father," he asked rather timidly, "may I really go with Mr. Delrick?"

"Do just what he says; it will be the right and proper thing."

Vinzi's eyes sparkled with joy. In a few days he would journey up the mountain and see all those who were dear to him. He could thank Father Silvanus, and he fully realized how much he owed him.

They all left Freiburg at the same hour, but went in different directions. It took the children some time to say farewell, but all were in a happy mood, for they would meet again next summer. Even Vinzi would be with them then. Mr. Delrick had promised he would bring him at the beginning of the vacation. Mr. Thornau journeyed off to Basle with his children; Vinzenz

Lesa toward Bulle to his paternal farm, Mr. Delrick and Mrs. Lesa, with the three children, proceeded to Lake Geneva. They were to spend the night in Lausanne and would reach home as early as possible the next morning.

On the evening of the next day, Vinzi went up to his little bedroom with his mother and when they entered, he exclaimed, "Oh, mother, how lovely our home is! Come in and say good-night like you always used to do."

Before going to bed, Stefeli ran out of the house. Yes, there sat Mr. Delrick on the bench, according to his custom.

"If you are really going up the mountain, Mr. Delrick, will you do something for me?" she asked, standing before him. "Will you tell Cousin Lorenz that Jos must certainly stay with us? He said he need not go home until father sends him, and he will never do that, that's easily seen."

Mr. Delrick promised, and smiled quietly as he thought of the similarity of the three messages he bore. Mr. Lesa had bid him urge his cousin to leave his son with him for awhile; it would be hard to get along without the boy. A few minutes later Jos had asked him to in-

form his father he could not return home for some time, there was so much to do for the winter, and the spring started down here so early that one could barely finish before the next year's work began. And Cousin Vinzenz ought not to be left alone now Vinzi would be away all the time, that was sure. Mr. Delrick said to himself with a smile that Cousin Lorenz could scarcely say no to all three wishes, considering his promise.

Mrs. Lesa went to Vinzi's room and sat down on his bed. This was the first time Vinzi had been alone with his mother since he had come home, and he poured out his heart to her about his life in Dresden. He had not written to her as his father said it was of no use so now he must tell her Mr. Delrick had been a father to him and had him study the organ with one teacher and the laws of music with another. This second teacher had opened a wonderful world to him. "But my organ lesson was the happiest time of all," added Vinzi. "Oh, mother, I never supposed one could look forward from day to day to anything as I did to that! It was a feast!"

The mother gazed at him with beaming eyes

as she asked, "And to live with Mr. Delrick and be with him constantly was happiness too, wasn't it, Vinzi?"

"Yes, great happiness!" he exclaimed. "It is a good thing you know him for I could never tell you how kind and helpful he was in everything. Everybody in his house was good to me for his sake. His housekeeper is as good as though she were my grandmother, and the manservant and the maidservant too. They all wait on me; they won't let me do anything for myself. That is because they are all so fond of organ music. The housekeeper says my playing has made Mr. Delrick happy again. Having lost all his loved ones, he was very sad. There is a small organ in his house, and Mr. Delrick asks me to play every evening. Sometimes we can hardly get enough. Now you know my life in Dresden, but lovely as it is there, I am glad to get home once more to my haymow up on the mountain under the stars."

"Vinzi," said his mother, "do you thank God for all the blessings He has given you?"

"Yes, mother, I do," and he looked frankly into her eyes. "I have never forgotten how frightened and anxious I often was. But now

when I sing the songs you taught me, I sing them differently than in those old days. Then I heard only the melody, but now I sing the songs of praise with my entire soul."

"Remember also," concluded his mother, "that whatever happens, the Lord means it for your good. When I sat on your bed that night before you went to the mountain I would have done anything to keep you home. That was my short-sightedness, for going was to bring you your greatest happiness."

Vinzi had listened thoughtfully and now said, "I too thought it was the saddest thing I could experience. It turned out the loveliest. I shall never forget it, mother."

When his mother left his room after an affectionate good-night, her heart was so filled with gratitude and happiness that she folded her hands and sent a prayer of thanks to Heaven. How much God had done for her and her household! Vinzi was on the road to his heart's desire, and his father was not only satisfied, but rejoiced over it. He no longer despised Vinzi; he had acknowledged his son was an honor to his family, and she noticed he again looked on him with pride.

And Vinzi, who had been away for so long and lived in such different surroundings and learned so much, had come back as loving, simple and childlike as when he went away. That was a great blessing to his mother, and she fervently prayed that during his whole life God would keep her son in the innocence and simplicity of childhood.

THE END